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SEPTEMBER 1956

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Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Rachmaninoff



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ORCHESTRA cond. by
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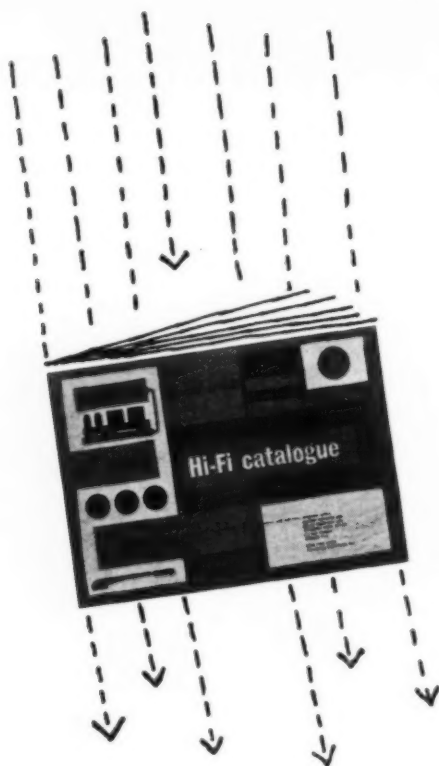
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They say

Beethoven SONATAS: NO.23 IN F MINOR ('APPASSIONATA'); NO.32 IN C MINOR—Julius

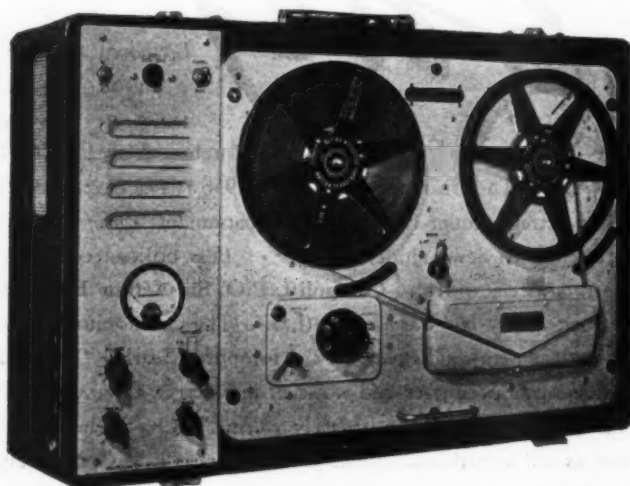
Katchen (Decca LXT 5187): 'The

last Sonata . . . is a profound spiritual experience.' (A.P.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) 'The Decca recording [of the 'Appassionata'] is excellent . . . ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—June, 1956.) ' . . . the outstanding performance and the best recording.' (Burnett James—'The Gramophone Record Review'—June, 1956.) • Bliss CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA; THEME AND CADENZA FOR SOLO VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA—Campoli/L.P.O./Sir Arthur Bliss (Decca LXT 5166*): ' . . . one of their very best recordings, of great clarity but warm tone.' (L.S.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) 'Campoli . . . copes with the very difficult solo part as if it were child's play, . . . ' (Humphrey Searle—'The Gramophone Record Review'—June, 1956.) • Haydn SONATAS: NO.46 IN A FLAT and NO.40 IN G; NO.30 IN C MINOR and NO.31 IN E —Kathleen Long (Decca LXT 5144): 'The piano quality on this disc is extremely realistic.' (R.F.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) ' . . . much sensitivity and polish, as well as real warmth and an excellent recording.' ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—May, 1956.) • Mendelssohn PIANO CONCERTOS: NO.1 IN G MINOR; NO.2 IN D MINOR—Peter Katin/L.S.O./Anthony Collins (Decca LXT 5201): 'A two star record. . . . The soloist's polished, shapely playing is finely supported by the orchestra; his tone is always beautiful, and the recording is first-rate.' (A.P.—'The Gramophone'—August, 1956.) 'These are excellent performances from every point of view, receiving fine, clear recording . . . ' ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—July, 1956.) • Mozart PIANO CONCERTO NO.27 IN B FLAT; SONATA NO.11 IN A—Wilhelm Backhaus/V.P.O./Karl Böhm (Decca LXT 5123**): ' . . . the Decca engineers have cleverly ensured a concert-hall 'feel' for the sound of the concerto, and the intimacy of one's own room for the sonata.' (A.P.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) • Prokofiev LIEUTENANT KIJÉ SUITE—Paris Conservatoire Orch.; LOVE OF THREE ORANGES SUITE—L.P.O. both cond. Sir Adrian Boult (Decca LXT 5119*): ' . . . an excellent disc, . . . ' (R.F.—'The Gramophone'—May, 1956.) 'A thoroughly desirable disc.' ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—May, 1956.) Rachmaninov PIANO CONCERTO NO.2 IN C MINOR—Clifford Curzon/L.P.O./Sir Adrian Boult (Decca LXT 5178*): 'The balance is excellent . . . the recording quality is very fine, and altogether I would strongly recommend this disc,' (R.F.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) 'Curzon proves himself a great virtuoso . . . the whole thing is brilliantly recorded.' ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—May, 1956.) • R. Strauss DIE FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN—Vienna State Opera soloists, chorus and orchestra/Karl Böhm (Decca LXT 5180-4*): 'These are certainly my records of the month.' (William Mann—'The Gramophone Record Review'—June, 1956.) 'A recording of outstandingly fine quality . . . ' (John Warrack—'Daily Telegraph'—18th June, 1956.) • Tchaikovsky THE QUEEN OF SPADES—Belgrade National Opera soloists, chorus and orchestra/Kreshimir Baranovich (Decca LXT 5189-92): 'The recording of it is excellent, with depth and ample sonority . . . ' (P.H.-W.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) 'There is tremendous virility about the singing and playing . . . The recording . . . is mostly satisfactory and very comfortable to play.' (Richard Law—'Record News'—May, 1956.) 'The singing throughout is of a very high standard . . . The orchestra is brilliant . . . very beautifully recorded . . . ' ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—June, 1956.) Tchaikovsky CAPRICCIO ITALIEN—L.S.O./Anthony Collins (Decca LXT 5186): ' . . . recording of a very high standard.' (M.M.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.); FRANCESCA DA RIMINI—L.S.O./Anthony Collins (Decca LXT 5186): ' . . . considerably the most desirable version of the four available . . . ' (M.M.—'The Gramophone'—June, 1956.) • 20TH CENTURY ENGLISH SONGS—Peter Pears/Benjamin Britten (Decca LW 5241): 'Peter Pears sings all these songs with intelligence and is very finely accompanied and recorded.' ('E.M.G. Monthly Letter'—May, 1956.)

* One of 'The Gramophone Record Review' Records of the Month selections.

** One of the ten best records of the month in the April-May number of the Mexican publication devoted to long playing records 'L.P.'

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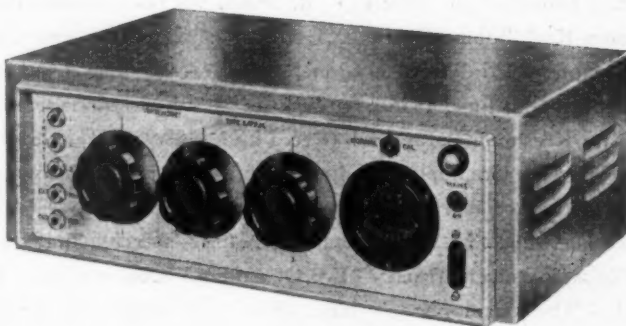
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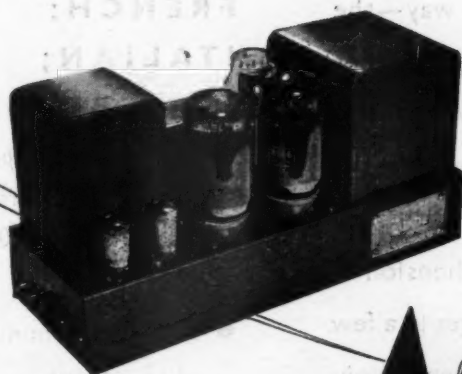
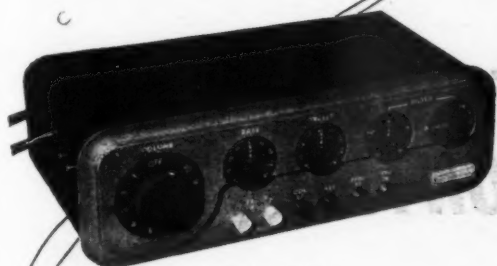
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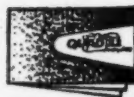
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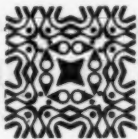
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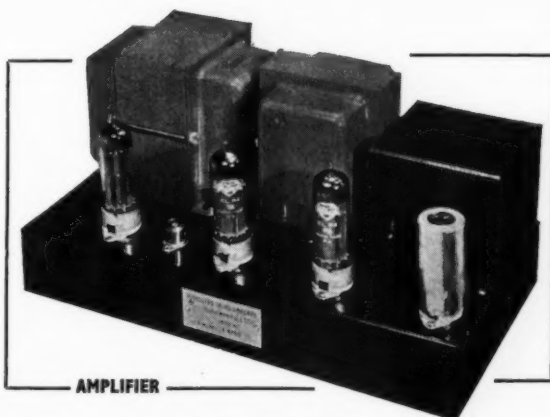
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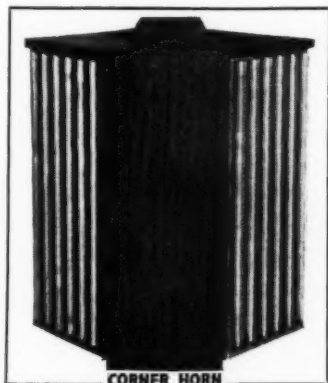
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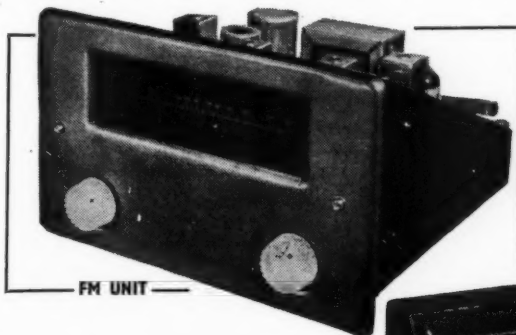
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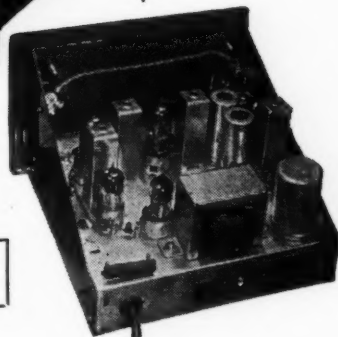
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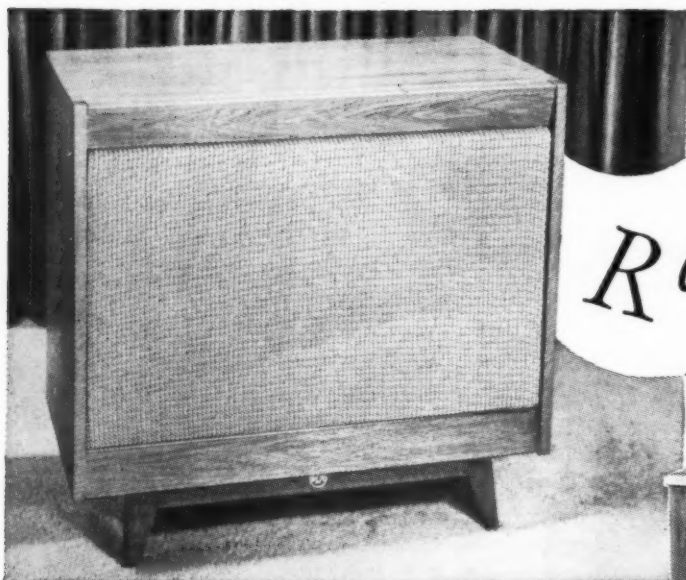
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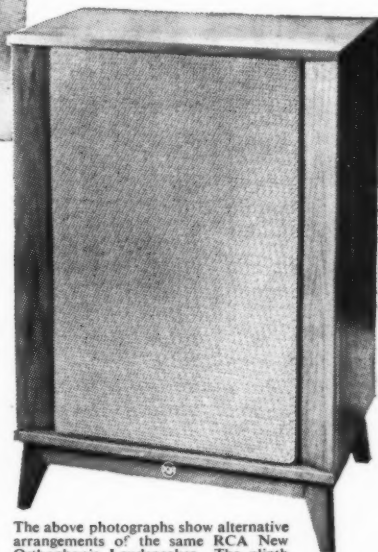


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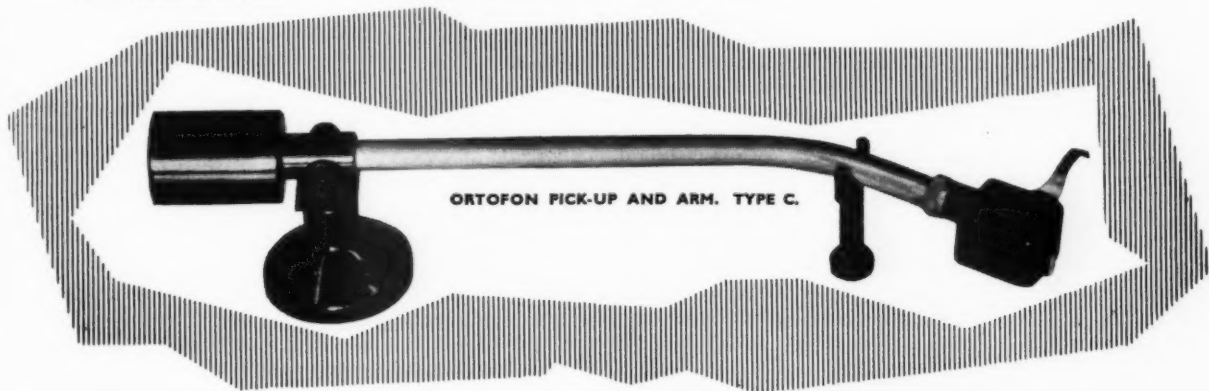
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See Technical Review, by P. Wilson, M.A., on page 147

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Nationalism in Music

Finland and Czechoslovakia

The conscious introduction of nationalism in music dates from about the middle of the nineteenth century. It had as its motive two causes: the strong political nationalism current in Europe at the time, and the "back to nature" and primitivist philosophy of the previous century which had contributed so much to the causes of the French Revolution, and was to represent itself now under the guise of Romanticism.

In Germany the musical counterpart of nationalism, as expressed in the works of Weber, Schumann, Wagner and Liszt had found its centres at Leipzig and Weimar; and to these centres, for their musical training, went many of the young composers of Northern Europe. Captured by these deep, emotional forces, they in turn searched for sources from which they could draw inspiration and expression for their own newly-developed nationalist

fervour. It is as a result of this that the music of Chopin, Liszt, Smetana and Dvorak, Grieg, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, and later Sibelius, to mention only a few, abounds with national feeling derived from the literature and accumulated folk-lore of their countries.

In Finland this folk-lore had been gathered into one of the greatest literary epics of the world, the Kalevala—a saga, half history, half myth, woven around the legendary figures of Väinämöinen and his brothers Ilmarin the Smith and the gallant Lemminkäinen. It was to the Kalevala that the national composers of Finland, especially Sibelius, turned for their inspiration.

Sibelius has from his earliest years evoked in his music the brooding and melancholic qualities of the Nordic temperament which pervade this Finnish epic. The inspiration of most of his compositions stems from it,

but especially in the case of the popular *Finlandia*, in which the composer uses not actual folk-tunes themselves, but themes based on them and remarkable for their lyrical similarity.

In Czechoslovakia nationalism derived also from the Romantic movement, but it was strongly backed by the ardent desire of the Czechs for freedom from Austrian domination. As in other countries Czech writers and thinkers were discovering the richness of their past. Legend, folk-lore, history, all served as their inspiration and they wrote as though seeing for the first time, the age-old culture, picturesque buildings and the scenic beauty which was their heritage. Her composers, strongly influenced by this new trend, wrote music that was literary both in style and content. This is perhaps illustrated best of all in the work of Smetana, most patriotic of all Bohemian composers, especially in his six tone poems *Ma Vlast*, and the series of operas he wrote between 1866 and 1882, of which the *Bartered Bride* is perhaps the most well known.



Smetana



Sibelius

Smetana

The Bartered Bride: Overture, Polka, Furiant,
Dance of the Comedians
Rafael Kubelik and The Philharmonia Orchestra
ALP1049 (LP)

Ma Vlast: Vltava
Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Vienna Philharmonic Orch.
BLP1009 (LP)

Sibelius

Finlandia
Sir Malcolm Sargent and the B.B.C. Symphony Orch.
7ER5029 (EP)

Karelia Suite: No. 1, Intermezzo; No. 3, Alla Marcia;
King Christian 2nd. Suite: No. 2, Musette;
Kuolema: Valse Triste
Basil Cameron and the London Philharmonic Orch.
DLP1100 (LP)

Symphony No. 1
Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra
ALP1210 (LP)

Symphony No. 2
Sir John Barbirolli and the
Hallé Orchestra ALP1122 (LP)

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THE GRAMOPHONE

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EDITORIAL

THERE are now many thousands of readers of THE GRAMOPHONE on whom the reminder that this is our Four-hundredth number will not make the slightest impression. In a way this is something on which to congratulate ourselves, because such indifference will be a sign that THE GRAMOPHONE is now taken for granted. However, I am proud to say that there are still quite a few readers who bought that first number in April 1923, and they will appreciate what the achievement of another century means to us, and I hope I may add to them. Certainly without those loyal readers who turned the pages of the first number thirty-three-and-a-half years ago we should have found the struggle to survive even grimmer than it sometimes has been. That we did manage to survive through the last war is due to such loyalty and

to the courage of our advertisers; I take this opportunity of thanking them for such a practical expression of confidence in our value as a link between them and our readers.

To-day new gramophone magazines are being launched all over the world and I have been touched by the generosity with which their editors have paid tributes to the example set by THE GRAMOPHONE.

As I write these words I hear over the radio the music from a *Rosamunde* entr'acte and to my sentimental pleasure above the strings the faint sound of a scratch on the record on which it is being played. It reminds me how much radio and the gramophone owe to one another.

Compton Mackenzie

* * * *

Vocal Collectors

Collectors of vocal records—which means pre-eminently operatic records—are nothing if not vocal, in the colloquial sense, themselves. We welcome their enthusiasm, while asking them to keep their letters as short as possible, and we only wish correspondence about other sorts of music would become more abundant.

Mr. Deric Johansen's letter, in our August issue, defending Mario del Monaco against his critics, has produced a spate of correspondence (which threatens to become as large as the Gigli-Caruso affair of the summer of 1953) and from which we will print as large a number of letters—or extracts therefrom—as possible.

It is encouraging to find that so many readers require more of a singer than a fine voice—a gift no one has denied to Del Monaco—and significant that only one of a dozen letters or more that are on my desk support, and then with qualifications, Mr. Johansen's point of view.

I think it can be said without fear of contradiction that all of our correspondents, in this last batch of letters, would be over-

joyed if Del Monaco were to develop artistry commensurate with his magnificent vocal equipment, and be the first to praise him. It could happen.

Covent Garden

The Covent Garden controversy that, for a time, enlivened the pages of *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* recently is no concern of this magazine, but allied to it is a plea, made by the Editor of *Opera* in his June number, that the recording companies should more generously consider the claims of our native operatic singers for recognition, and this we gladly support. It is disappointing to find that no letters favouring such action have appeared in the two subsequent issues of *Opera*, but perhaps Mr. Rosenthal has a whole batch of them to fire off at the companies in his next number. Meanwhile I am told that something is being done: and we must hope that whatever does appear will be imaginatively planned and that the greatest possible attention will be paid to clear enunciation. Many of us will remember with pleasure the many 78 discs of our singers—including

even the issue of a few complete operas—which appeared long ago and which, I believe, had a good sale. When, and if, any new discs appear it will be interesting to compare the standard of singing on them with that of the past and we will make arrangements to that end.

Elgar Centenary

To the comprehensive list of works by Elgar that our readers would like to have recorded for the composer's centenary I should like to add one short and beautiful piece that has quite dropped out of the repertory. This is the *Funeral March* from Elgar's incidental music to the Moore-Yeats play *Grania and Diarmid*: and I would also like to suggest that H.M.V. should issue a number of transfers onto LP of the 78 discs of his works that Elgar conducted himself. Those that I have heard recently still sound remarkably well and the composer's own interpretations should not be lost to us and future generations.

Imperfect Wagnerite

This heading, suggested by Bernard Shaw's book, *The Perfect Wagnerite*, must, I am sorry to say, be bestowed upon Oivin Fjeldstad, the conductor of Decca's issue of *Götterdämmerung*. It appears, from what the Decca Record Company have told me, that the cut of forty bars in Act 1 that I pointed out in my review was not due to any last minute mechanical defect, but was authorised by the conductor and, indeed, insisted upon by him.

Deeply though so inartistic a decision must be deplored one should, however, keep a sense of proportion: and I hope perfect Wagnerites will not just avert their gaze from the issue, but will examine it for themselves before reaching any verdict. It seems unlikely that there will be another Brünnhilde of Flagstad's stature in our time and for the sake of her wonderful performance one can accept, if not condone, the cut, for which—had attention not been drawn to the matter—Decca might unjustly have been blamed.

New Philips Label

In this issue there are the first reviews of the new Philips "Favourite Music Series". These ten-inch LPs are priced at 24s. and will feature recordings of the popular classical works suitably designed to form the basis of a classical record collection.

ALEC ROBERTSON

LETTER FROM AMERICA

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

SEVERAL modern composers, notably Stravinsky, Bartók and Bloch, have rather unexpectedly come in for a good deal of attention from the record companies. Unexpectedly, because there is no anniversary or what American journalists call a "news peg" upon which to hang the recordings. Of Stravinsky we have had, among other things, an Angel disc devoted to *Le Rossignol*, one of the composer's most entrancing scores. A group of French soloists is headed by Janine Micheau, and André Cluytens leads the chorus and orchestra of Radiodiffusion Française. This is an excellent performance. Micheau is in fine voice, and Cluytens conducts with obvious affinity for the music (curiously he seems less comfortable in an Angel disc of Ravel, where his *Valses nobles et sentimentales* is virtually the most languishing on LP). *Le Rossignol* is a seldom-played score, and so is *Renard*, which makes its entry on a London disc conducted by Ansermet and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. This is the only available LP; an earlier version by Dial has disappeared. Sharing the *Renard* disc is *Apollon Musagète*, mislabelled on the record as *Apollo Musagettes*. Ansermet, of course, is one of the great Stravinskyans, and one could not ask for the music to be heard under better auspices. The fine vocal quartet in *Renard* consists of Michel Sénéchal, Hugues Cuenod, Heniz Rehfuß and Xavier Depraz.

Four Stravinsky choral works occupy an Epic disc in which soloists and the Netherlands Chamber Choir are conducted by Felix de Nobel. The works are *Les Noces*, the Mass, *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*. But none of these performances is much to exclaim about. I miss here a really spirited, *sec* attack of the kind that Stravinsky himself knows so well how to supply when he conducts his own music.

The Bartók entries are headed by the Vegh Quartet's three-disc performance, for Angel, of the six String Quartets. Up to now the standard LP performance has been that of the Juilliard Quartet (Columbia). Those discs date back to 1950. The new Angel recordings are, as might be expected, richer in tone, though part of that is due to the Vegh group, which has a more mellow quality than the Juilliard. The Vegh performances, too, are quite different. The Juilliard are more cutting, more strongly rhythmic, more interested in dynamic contrast; the Vegh are smoother, more subtle, and make the music easier to listen to. Which is "better" I do not know, but my preference would be for the new Angel set.

Another large-scale Bartók work is *Mikrokosmos*, that six-volume collection of 153 piano studies. Two companies have just recorded this—Columbia, with Gyorgy Sandor as the pianist, and Westminster, with Edith Farnadi. My preference here is Farnadi, who is less bleak and percussive than Sandor. And still another long, and

seldom-heard, work by the Hungarian master is the Second Suite (Op. 4) for Orchestra, available on a Mercury disc with Antal Dorati and the Minneapolis Symphony. Bartók revised the score in 1943; its original conception dates from 1907. It opens in a very tuneful manner, and while some dissonances later occur, the work as a whole is an attractive, nationalistic effort with its roots in the post-romantic school.

Two important Bartók works, the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion and the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste, are on a Vox disc. The pianists in the Sonata are Charlotte Zelka and Alfred Brendel, assisted by four percussionists. In the other score Rolf Reimhardt directs the Pro Musica Orchestra of Stuttgart. Over an hour of music is contained on this disc, but the recording remains hi-fi, with no trace of inner-groove distortion, and the performances are first-class. A valuable addition to the Bartók discography.

Of Bloch we have the magnificent String Quartet No. 1, on a Mercury disc played by the Roth Quartet. This quartet, like the other three, grows upon the listener with repeated hearings. It is strong, sad and lyrical, and composed with uncompromising mastery. Can it be that in Bloch we have an immortal? Mercury also is responsible for a disc devoted to the Violin Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2, played by Rafael Druian and John Simms. No. 2 is the *Poème Mystique*, a long and rather vague work (but let's hear it some more!), while No. 1 is powerful and relentless, abounding in dissonance. Druian brings a strong, assured approach to the music.

While we're at it, let's look at some other moderns on recent LP discs. Mercury, to whom we owe a great deal of current modernism, has recorded a record containing two scores by American composers—Elliott Carter's *The Minotaur* and Colin McPhee's *Tabuh-Tabuhan*, both conducted by Howard Hanson, with the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra. Carter's is a ballet score in the modern idiom—dissonant, taut, skilfully orchestrated, not very melodic. McPhee's score is Balinese-inspired, full of exotic sounds that go on for a long time. Respighi's *Feste Romane* and Kodály's *Háry Janos* Suite, both with Toscanini and the N.B.C. Symphony, have been released by Victor. The Kodály has been taken from the broadcast of November 29th, 1947, and is not a very successful transfer, tonally speaking. The Respighi sounds better, but who can work up much interest over such a collection of trashy effects? Westminster comes up with an offering called *Seven Beauties Ballet* by Kara Karayev. The Orchestra of the Maly Theatre is conducted by Eduard Grikurov. This score was composed in 1951, and one hopes it is not typical of contemporary Russian composition. It is horribly conventional, and even Hollywood does much better with this type of thing.

Much more interesting, also from Westminster, is a disc of music by Gosta Nystroem, the contemporary Swedish composer. Tor Mann leads the Stockholm Radio Orchestra in *The Merchant of Venice* incidental music and the song cycle *Songs of the Sea*, the latter with Aulikki Rautawarra, who still has a lovely voice despite obvious signs of age. Nystroem writes in a fairly conservative idiom, but he has enough personality to make the idiom his own.

Carl Nielsen's Third Symphony (*Espansiva*) receives a good performance on an Epic disc featuring the Danish National Orchestra under J. Frandsen. On a Columbia disc the Philadelphia Woodwind Quartet plays an assorted group of modern works—Hindemith's *Kleine Kammermusik*, Ibert's *Trois pièces brèves*, and a woodwind work by Bozza. Haydn and Beethoven also enter into the picture. Beautiful recording here, and accomplished playing; but the emphasis is a little too much on tone and technique and not enough on content.

That about takes care of the moderns, for the time being, unless you want to include Rachmaninov (Second Piano Concerto); Eugene Istomin and Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy; a Columbia disc and an unsuitable performance, Turina (a Westminster disc of piano music played by Echaniz with his usual brittle tone), and Mahler (the Symphony No. 6 on two Epic discs, with Eduard Flipse and the Rotterdam Philharmonic: a thoughtful performance of Mahler's miseries). London is reintroducing on one disc works previously contained on two. For example, the Curzon performances of Grieg's Piano Concerto and De Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* are now available on one 12-inch. London has also brought together *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* into a single album.

The "big" sets continue. Vox, something of a pioneer along those lines, especially in the field of baroque music, has two large-scale additions to its catalogue. One contains Vivaldi's *La Cetra* (three discs), a series of twelve violin concertos played by Reinhold Barchet, with the Pro Musica Orchestra of Stuttgart under Rolf Reimhardt. These are clear, straightforward performances. I'll leave it to the musicologists to argue about the stylistic niceties, but I like eighteenth century music played this way—with clarity, rhythm and an avoidance of vibrato. The other set (two discs) contains the Twelve Concerti (Op. 3) by Francesco Manfredini, played by the Musici Virtuosi di Milano under Dean Eckerton. These works are fairly routine, enlivened by a few imaginative strokes, as in No. 10 in G minor. Still, how much Manfredini has one heard in a lifetime? At least we can study them via this LP. Another "big" set is the three-disc Angel collection of Ravel's piano music played by Gieseking. The recorded sound is a little tubby, but otherwise clear and quiet, and the playing is that of a master even when his technique is not all it might be (*Scarbo*) or his conception curiously stodgy (second movement of *Sonatine*).

Mozart, Mozart everywhere. Oistrakh, on a Columbia disc, is heard in the Violin Concerto No. 4: very romantic, throbbing,

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large-scale and overpowering (the Mendelssohn Concerto is also on this disc, with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra; and this is a stunning virtuoso performance). Two equally famous violinists play Mozart for Victor. Heifetz, accompanied by Brooks Smith, plays the Sonatas in B flat (K.378) and B flat (K.454) with elegance, and Menuhin is heard in the Violin Concertos Nos. 4 and 5, with the Philharmonia under Pritchard. He brings some fine lyric playing to Mozart; this is one of his best discs in years (though why the sluggish finale to No. 5?). Julius Katchen is miscast as a Mozart player in his London disc of the Piano Concertos Nos. 13 and 20. This is much too cute and kitsch (nor does Katchen's superficial performance of the Tchaikovsky B flat minor Concerto have much to recommend). And Ellen Gilberg, in her Vox disc of the Piano Concertos Nos. 11 and 14, does not rise much above mediocrity. Erich Leinsdorf and the Philharmonic Symphony of London continue their Mozart series for Westminster with the Symphonies Nos. 35, 36 and 37 (the last-named work actually by Michael Haydn). Leinsdorf conducts with brick competence but there is more to the music than that. More piano concertos: Nos. 6 in B flat and 14 in E flat, played on an Epic disc by Hans Henckemans and the Vienna Symphony under Paumgartner in a literal, unimaginative manner; and more symphonies—Nos. 26, 32 and 41, again Epic, with Karl Böhm and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Böhm takes fast tempos. His first movement of the *Jupiter* is almost flip, nor do I find much conviction elsewhere on this disc, though the earlier works fare better in the conductor's dispassionate approach.

Among solo players there is Michael Rabin, on an Angel disc devoted to Bach's Violin Sonata No. 5 and Ysaye's Nos. 3 and 4. All of these are for unaccompanied violin. Rabin is a wonderful talent, but is not yet emotionally ready for Bach. His Ysaye has remarkable aplomb and purity of tone. On a Westminster LP, Fernando Valenti plays twelve more harpsichord sonatas by Scarlatti. This is Vol. 14 in the series; about 380 sonatas more, and Valenti will have done the cycle. Small-scaled performance of Schubert's posthumous B flat Sonata and Sonata in A (Op. 120) are played by Badura-Skoda (Westminster), and two seldom-heard sonatas by the same composer are undertaken by Friedrich Wuehrer (Vox). Those are the incomplete Sonatas in E major and F minor, the finale of the latter containing a remarkable anticipation of the finale of Chopin's B flat minor Sonata. Vox also introduces Mario Tipo, the young Italian pianist, who plays twelve Scarlatti sonatas in a brisk, skilful and exuberant manner.

London's recording of the Fauré Requiem, with Danco, Souzay and the chorus and orchestra of the Suisse Romande under Ansermet, is almost the definitive version. It is spoiled by Danco's off-pitch and tremulous singing of the *Pie Jesu*. A welcome addition to the choral literature on discs is the Vox performance of Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, with Friederike Sailer, Hanne Münch and the Mainz Chamber Orchestra

under Günter Kehr. This is an incredibly beautiful work, clearly sung and played. For solo singing there is a Victor reissue of Aksel Schiøtz, a London disc in which Alfred Deller sings lutenist songs and Buxtehude, and a Tebaldi recital in which

Mozart is poorly sung and the Italian operas (especially two from *Adriana Lecouvreur*) utterly exquisite; and, finally, Victor's issue of Beniamino Gigli's Carnegie Hall recital, a distressing release and one that does no credit to the veteran tenor.

LETTER FROM FRANCE

By IGOR B. MASLOWSKI

SINCE July Deutsche Grammophon have distributed their own records in this country with a first release totalling something like sixty classical LPs and EPs alone, and a spokesman for the company said that all the available D.G.G. products would be issued here before the end of the year, while later most of the discs would be released simultaneously here and in Germany. All classical LPs are imported from across the Rhine, the sleeve only being French-made. Needless to say, this massive release which was to be followed by a no less bulky one contains some of the finest D.G.G. recordings. This is the case of Beethoven's Ninth by Eugen Jochum heading the Bavarian Radio's S.O. and Choirs which must rank among the best versions of this work. The singing of Walther Ludwig, the tenor of the vocal quartet, is particularly splendid and inspired (other singers are Clara Ebers, Gertrude Pitzinger and Ferdinand Frantz). Herr Jochum is also responsible for a wonderful rendering, with the same orchestra and chorus, of Bruckner's *Te Deum* (the vocal quartet here being Maud Cunitz, again Miss Pitzinger, Lorenz Fehenberger and Georg Hann).

The tenth anniversary of Bartók's death has been commemorated by D.G.G. through a four-disc set of Piano Music by Andor Foldes, which contains, amongst others, several extracts from *Mikrokosmos* and *For Children*, Rumanian and Bulgarian Dances, the Sonata, 15 Hungarian Peasant Songs, the Sonatina, two Elegies, *Allegro barbaro*, Esquisses, etc.—practically all of Bartók's important piano works. Foldes's playing is of a very high level. Another Bartók work, *Two portraits for violin and orchestra*, is offered on another D.G.G. disc, by the RIAS S.O. under Fricsay (with Rudolf Schulz, violin), coupled with *Variations for orchestra on a theme of Paganini*. The latter, by the modern German composer Boris Blacher, sounds both original and interesting. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* is magnificently performed by the Berlin P.O. under Karl Böhm, with the Choirs of the St. Hedwig Cathedral and Maria Stader, Marianna Radev, Anton Dermota and Josef Greindl. In my opinion, this recording outclasses both Toscanini's and Klemperer's, while sonically the D.G.G. engineers have once more done a splendid job. A complete recording of *The Magic Flute* by the RIAS S.O. and Choir under Fricsay is also part of this release.

Erato's August release includes a recording by Helmut Krebs and the Munich "Pro Arte" Chamber Orchestra under Kurt Redel, of seven Mozart Concert Arias for Tenor and Orchestra. What a splendid

voice, and what a finesse in the performance of these extremely difficult pieces!

Chant du Monde has issued what is probably the best LP version of Beethoven's *Eroica* by the Dresden S.O. under Franz Konwitschny. This is an authentically "heroic" rendering of this epic work and the Funeral March has almost "plastic" qualities. C.d.M. have also a very good reading by pianist Robert Cormann of Bartók's *Allegro barbaro*, Piano Sonata, Suite, Op. 14, and extracts from *Mikrokosmos* and the *Rumanian Christmas Carols*, as well as a very delicate performance by Czech artists Jasek Ladislav and Lochmanova Zorha of Dvořák's Sonatina, Op. 100.

The issue by Club Français du Disque of Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel's (1690-1749) Concerto Grosso a Quattro Chori may well lead to the "rediscovery" of still another unjustly forgotten composer of the 18th century. If one may compare Stölzel to some other great musician, the name of Handel immediately comes to one's mind, as the first *Allegro* carries an indisputable resemblance to the *Water Music*. The performance by the Cento Soli under Günter Wand is first rate. Under the title "Italian Golden Age", C.F.D. have also released String Quartets by Boccherini (in A), Cambini (in B min.) and Paisiello (in E flat), the latter being the most attractive and unusual one. These are played by the Carmirelli Quartet. With *Sabre Dance* as an "introductory band", C.F.D. have also recorded Khachaturian's Violin Concerto by the Cento Soli S.O. under Serge Baudo, Devy Erlih being the soloist. This is one of the most lyric, ungypsy-like performances I have ever heard of this popular work.

Véga's latest "Study in Hi-Fi" comprises French music (Dukas, Chabrier, Saint-Saëns) performed by a British Orchestra (the P.S.O. of London) under the baton of an Italian maestro (Argeo Quadri). Although one admires much the sonic qualities of this LP, Signor Quadri's readings have failed to convince me, this being particularly true of *Danse Macabre* and *L'Apprenti Sorcier*.

Libretti

The Decca Record Company of 1-3 Brixton Road, London, S.W.9, announce the availability of the following libretti to accompany the recordings issued on the Decca label. BORODIN: *Prince Igor* (original Russian, with an English transliteration and line-by-line translation) 10s. DONIZETTI: *La Favorita* (Italian-English) 4s. MOZART: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Italian-English) 4s. PUCCINI: *Turandot* (Italian-English) 4s. VERDI: *The Force of Destiny* (Italian-English) 4s.

FIFTY YEARS OF GREAT OPERATIC SINGING

By PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

LIKE thousands of other people—but especially because I am a critic—I am passionately interested in records of past performances. Not inanimate souvenirs: Napoleon's hat and Dickens's pencil leave me cold. But a scrap of film showing how Pavlova danced or Duse moved and any gramophone record which reports the inflections of Bernhardt or Chaliapin—these I hold to be among the best of treasures, to be cherished; or destroyed only to earn the contempt of unborn generations.

Until the Second World War it seemed as if the gramophone understood its own priceless value as a museum, quite apart from any other function it might have. H.M.V. kept a catalogue well stocked with famous historic performances. But since the LP revolution and its deletions, one had begun to wonder if this sense of responsibility had died. Wholesale deletions were not, as one had expected, followed by LPs of matrix-minted anthologies of the great artists of the past. Now, at last, things seem to be under way. Supervia has been re-issued: I hear tell of a Caruso record: this month there is an anthology of McCormack especially valuable as a symptom because it collects his magical singing of songs many of which could be dismissed as trash, though the point is precisely that the singer's magic made pearls of them. Above all H.M.V. has launched out with this series of five "volumes"—i.e. separately purchasable anthologies, decade by decade, of some sixty-eight famous recordings.

This is of intense interest to collectors—not only for what it is but for the gesture it represents.

The bargain is surely a very good one—if you think what second hand dealers often ask for a single battered 78 of a performance which here may well be one of fifteen transfers onto a single LP double-sided disc. On playing condition I think it best not to enlarge too much. Naturally records made before you were born don't sound like discs made yesterday. Sometimes one suspects a slight loss of quality or a wrong key, but generally the bulk of them come up wonderfully well on a good machine: better than the VA and VB Archive white label pressings. The transfers seem to have avoided fuzz; added resonance is apparent (to my ear) once or twice. But the condition is not what will most worry people who will respond excitedly to this issue: it is rather the selection, which was made by that serious American critic and biographer of the Met., Irving Kolodin.

Everyone thinks he can make an anthology better than the next man and this series originally planned by R.C.A. Victor to please New York audiences (who had fond memories of the Met.) may not

be immediately what you or I would have selected. Bearing that in mind I still find some of the choices strange and the number of duplications mysterious, though, obviously, one would try to avoid having fifty-eight great singers all doing the same two or three items. Then, some may say there is too much Sembrich, even too much Caruso; and I cannot understand how any American should omit entirely Schumann-Heink or Bori, De Luca and Tetrizzini, while finding room even for Sembrich as *The Merry Widow*!

On the other hand since Mr. Kolodin working by his own lights feels able to include such marvels as Nina Kochetz's Jaroslava aria I decline to be too logical in the matter. What the collection represents to you depends after all on what your operatic experience has been. The ordering of the anthology seems designed not to make a concert so much as to put one kind of singer of a decade up against another of the same kind—a run of tenors robusti or light sopranos. Some juxtapositions sound bad (i.e. "Nessun dorma" after "Dite a la giovine") the sort of follow-on which a programme-builder on the B.B.C. would avoid. Again among the older pieces sometimes a reasonably successful capture of a light accompaniment is followed by a piece where the accompaniment (as distinct from the voice) is woefully flat and groany—uncomfortably reminding us of the history of recording as opposed to the history of singing.

I suggest that where possible one should give Mr. Kolodin (as also the artist) the benefit of the doubt: one should try the items in the historical order in which they are marshalled: and always listen with a sense of historical perspective. The total results will then I think be strangely impressive. That they should give rise to violent controversy would be proof of course of their importance. I don't expect everyone to agree with my following first notes on the individual items.

VOLUME I. Di quella pira! from "Il Trovatore", Act 3 (Verdi). Francesco Tamagno (tenor with piano). **Alla vita che t'arride** from "Un Ballo in Maschera", Act 1 (Verdi). Mattia Battistini (baritone with orchestra). 1907. **King Philip's Aria** from "Don Carlos", Act 4 (Verdi). Pol Plancon (bass with orchestra). March 27th, 1907. **Batti, batti, o bel Masetto** from "Don Giovanni", Act 1 (Mozart). Adeline Patti (soprano). Sir Landon Ronald (piano) Craig-y-Nos Castle, Wales, 1905. **Costa diva, che inargenti** from "Norma", Act 1 (Bellini). Marcella Sembrich (soprano with orchestra). October 11th, 1907. **Bel raggio lusinghier** from "Semiramide", Act 1 (Rossini). Marcella Sembrich (soprano with orchestra). November 2nd, 1908. **Des larmes de la nuit**; **Ballade: Paix et blonde** from "Hamlet", Act 4 (Thomas). Dame Nellie Melba (soprano with orchestra). August 25th, 1910. **O soave fanciulla** from "La Bohème", Act 1 (Puccini). Dame Nellie Melba (soprano), Enrico Caruso (tenor) with orchestra. March 24th, 1907.

SIDE 1.

Naturally these oldest choices need listening to with a historical sense and many allowances for overtones lost from the vocal quality, to say nothing of groaning

or tinkling accompaniments. I have studied Mr. Kolodin's notes and nothing he says however suggests that he is even aware that in these very old recordings the question of what key was originally used by the singer is even a problem at all.

Tamagno died at 54. It seems likely this record was made in his fifty-first year (i.e. 1902). It shows the immensely loud first Otello in fine fettle, with ringing high C's and a robust if rather coarse singing style which either Caruso or Björling could easily improve on. But its link with the past makes it welcome. Battistini who never appeared in the U.S.A. sings Verdi at his leisure but with a beautiful suave line. Timbre and style are faithfully caught for those who are prepared to listen intently. Item 3 shows Plancon the great bass singing in the French of Verdi's original (Mr. Kolodin seems to forget that *Don Carlos* was not an Italian libretto). The old master uses a wonderfully flexible legato and interprets regally, with feeling, never spilled over. With Patti we must ask whether the old lady in her sixties really sang "Batti, batti" in F. Mr. Kolodin thinks that her apparent haste is due to the time limit of the record running short; I suggest that she really sang in E flat (at which rate it sounds quite natural) and that it was subsequently pushed up by someone who simply supposed that Mozart's original key would have been used). Here nearly all the "woodwind" timbre of the voice and the warmth are missing. A far better souvenir would have been her "Voi che sapete" which to be sure is also the singing of an old lady but does explain why Patti had been what she had. This "Batti, batti" as recorded has traces of the grand style and the weird way Mozart was sung in those days, but I do strongly question its inclusion in this form; even as a historical document it seems to me dubious.*

Mr. Kolodin's predilection for Sembrich is obvious—and respected by me. The *Costa diva*, with personal embellishments, is a piece of singing of the grand epoch, no doubt at all, though I doubt it was a representative item of Sembrich's repertoire. Note the marvellous glissando and trill, before the end of the slow section. The tempo of the caballeta is all-over-the-place in the manner sanctioned in those days and while wonderfully flexible in its seamless passage work curiously unexciting. She also sounds pallid in "Bel raggio"—incredible not to have selected Tetrizzini's dazzler!—but the florid singing is magically light while the whole show piece has a devoted and musicianly quality about it.

The sole Melba inclusion might—though I acquit the anthologist of any such intent—have been chosen to put us off this great singer. Her 1910 batch in any case, and especially Ophelia's Mad Scene caught her voice unkindly—making it sound hard very often, instead of at once clarion-clear yet pearly, as do so many of the recordings of a few years earlier. The 1907 version of this scene is infinitely preferable. Here the excerpt starts in any case without the marvellously tender moment (in

*H.M.V. advise us that this aria has now been retransferred and on commercial pressings it will appear in E♭.

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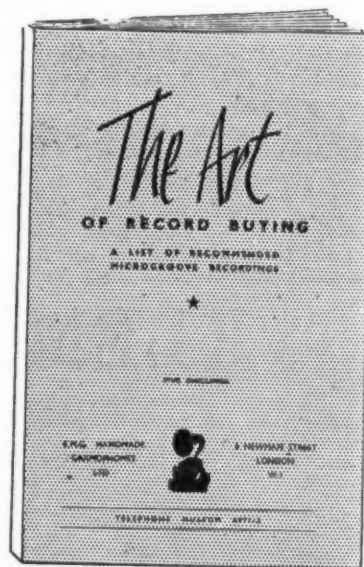
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which Gounod so loved Melba) where Ophelia sings "... et moi, et moi je suis son époux". You can hear if you listen with the ear of a true Melba connoisseur, some peerless Marchesi-style singing, plus unusual passion. But Melba's vocal acting was not perhaps her "point"; in 1910 her efforts to sound mad—with staccato accuti—are here brought out like the barking of a Pomerian lap dog and can hardly be borne until one has kept at it many, many times—when their pathos is suddenly apparent. Mr. Kolodin avers that her voice "had no thrilling beauty"—so maybe his choice is not surprising. The pearly quality, and the absolute dead centre pitch of the voice are better caught in the Bohème duet which follows with Caruso (the only duet these two made together) so famous as hardly to call for my comment; Melba's C at the end and the blending of the two voices is like the glow of stars high in a moonless night. If for nothing else this band would be worth the whole side's price.

VOLUME I, SIDE 2. *Spirito gentil* from "La Favorita", Act 4 (Donizetti). Enrico Caruso (tenor with orchestra). February 11th, 1906. *L'onore i ladri* from "Falstaff", Act 1 (Verdi). Antonio Scotti (baritone with orchestra). October 7th, 1909. *Ma brava! Vado, coro* from "Don Pasquale", Act 1 (Donizetti). Marcella Sembrich (soprano), Antonio Scotti (baritone) with orchestra. March 14th, 1906. *Chanson de la Puce* from "La Damnation de Faust", Act 2 (Berlioz). Pol Plançon (bass with orchestra). March 27th, 1907. *Vision fugitive* from "Herodiade", Act 2 (Massenet). Maurice Renaud (baritone with orchestra). 1906. *Waltz Song* from "The Merry Widow", Act 3 (Lehar). Marcella Sembrich (soprano with orchestra). January 30th, 1908. *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* from "Carmen", Act 1 (Bizet). Emma Calvé (soprano with orchestra). April 22nd, 1907. *Gavotte: Obélisques, quand leur voix appelle* from "Manon", Act 3 (Massenet). Geraldine Farrar (soprano with orchestra). December 8th, 1908. *No, Pagliaccio non son* from "I Pagliacci", Act 2 (Leoncavallo). Enrico Caruso (tenor with orchestra). December 28th, 1910. H.M.V. CSLP 500 (12 in., 42s. 6d.).

Caruso in his earlier and more lyrical manner was a good choice. But it is certain, once more, that this comes out in the key he sang it in? The breath span is wonderful. Scotti's Falstaff monologue is effectively alive and he also is very well represented by the *Pasquale* rehearsal duet, in which Sembrich sounds far more animated than usual: a wonderful blend both in florid passages and tenuti, both dead in tune. (This item 3 came out here recently in the Archive series VB29.) Item 4 is a gayer aspect of Plançon and earns its place; and then comes a truly wonderfully singing lesson from Renaud, a great French Don Giovanni. Here is baritone singing of the great epoch, marvellously controlled, perfectly in focus, swelled or retracted at any pressure or placing. With what quality of tone and art does he steer into the last caressing repetition of the words of the title. But the recording is foggy. Sembrich's Merry Widow may be hard to justify logically in such a selection; but how sweet is her tone, what a trill and what a final flourish—really dazzling! Calvé connoisseurs often prefer the earlier Habenera with piano, which does not give any impression of breathlessness. This 1907 version however is also utterly winning in timbre, in its contained vitality and the elegance of the singing together with

something mysteriously withdrawn and mocking in the interpretation (as at the imitable start of the second verse). A wonderful souvenir, finely representative—in as far as conditions allowed.

Farrar's delightful personality also comes out in her decidedly American-French version of the *Manon* gavotte: I find this, though not unbeatably distinguished in any way, curiously appealing. The final outburst from Caruso's Canio hardly calls for comment; except that such intensity must always be a kind of miracle or "blue moon"! The excerpt ends before Nedda's declaration.

VOLUME II. *Votre mere avec moi sortait de la chapelle* from "Carmen", Act 1 (Bizet). Lucy Isabelle Marsh (soprano), John McCormack (tenor) with orchestra. May 1st, 1913. *Si tu m'aimes* from "Carmen", Act 4 (Bizet). Margarete Matzenauer (contralto), Pasquale Amato (baritone) with orchestra. March 22nd, 1912. *Recit.: O figli! Aria: Ah, la paternina mano* from "Macbeth", Act 4 (Verdi). Enrico Caruso (tenor with orchestra). February 23rd, 1916. *Instant charmant: En fermant les yeux* from "Manon", Act 2 (Massenet). Edmond Clément (tenor), Frank la Forge (piano). November 6th, 1911. *Manon! On l'appelle Manon* from "Manon", Act 2 (Massenet). Geraldine Farrar (soprano), Enrico Caruso (tenor) with orchestra. December 30th, 1912. *O patria* from "Aida", Act 3 (Verdi), Emmy Destinn (soprano with orchestra). February 24th, 1914. *Qui la voce sua* from "I Puritani", Act 2 (Bellini). Frieda Hempel (soprano with orchestra). March 5th, 1914.

SIDE 1.

Miss Marsh the Micaela was apparently well loved in oratorio in America; she sounds fresh and neat. McCormack is not specially well represented but sings along in a sturdy manner. In the second *Carmen* duet Amato appears badly, with a braying vibrato; Matzenauer the famous Hungarian born contralto sounds, on the other hand, as regal as some port wine contralto in British oratorio. I cannot think this a very good inclusion. Caruso as MacDuff, too, is well known; but Edmond Clément's dream from *Manon* surprises; this light tenor with a voice of beautiful grain, phrases with an artistry comparable to Schipa nearer our day. One would have liked something of his which included florid singing. The letter-reading scene between Manon and Des Grieux is charmingly rendered by Farrar and Caruso and seems to give a very true idea of the style and atmosphere of what you would have heard in 1912. Destinn is perhaps only so meagrely represented because her career was a thing of fits and starts as far as America went. Surely her peerless "Vissi d'arte" ought to have been included? But this "O Patria mia" is certainly a gem; tender, passionate exquisitely phrased and with a perfectly managed climax. The voice sounds very purely recorded, without that slight "yowl" which occurs in some of her discs; what it doesn't suggest apart from the intensity is the sheer loudness of the voice: still, a wonderful souvenir. The side concludes with Hempel's pure and devoted singing of "Qui la voce," the Mad Scene from *Puritani*. A pity it wasn't something by Mozart; I don't denigrate Hempel's fine line in the Bellini, but I have heard more tender and purely *bel canto* accounts of this aria and I would even put Toti dal Monte's a shade higher, not to say Boronat on VA11 (Archive Series).

VOLUME II, SIDE 2. *Ah! dite alla giovine* from "La Traviata", Act 2 (Verdi). Frieda Hempel (soprano), Pasquale Amato (baritone) with orchestra. April 16th, 1914. *Si, Mi chiamano Mimì* from "La Bohème", Act 1 (Puccini). Claudia Muzio (soprano) with orchestra. June 20th, 1911. *Champs paterà* from "Joseph", Act 1 (Mehul). John McCormack (tenor with orchestra). October 23rd, 1917. *In quelle trine morbide* from "Manon Lescaut", Act 2 (Puccini). Frances Alda (soprano with orchestra). April 4th, 1912. *Gia! mi dicono venal* from "Tosca", Act 2 (Puccini). Titta Ruffo (baritone with orchestra). April 14th, 1915. *O monumento* from "La Gioconda", Act 1 (Ponchielli). Titta Ruffo (baritone with orchestra). September, 1912. *Magische Töne* from "Die Königin von Saba", Act 2 (Goldmark). Leo Slezak (tenor with orchestra). 1906. *Donna non vidi mai* from "Manon Lescaut", Act 1 (Puccini). Enrico Caruso (tenor with orchestra). February 24th, 1913. H.M.V. CSLP501 (12 in., 42s. 6d.).

The *Traviata* duet (which turns up again later) is beautifully sung by both Hempel, drawing a silver point line only equalled by Melba in versions known to me, and by Amato, though one evidently misses a great deal from this voice (De Luca, with Galli-Curci, was surely finer?). The Muzio choice is odd; she later made such wonderful records that this—which must have been made when she was only 19—seems premature. The imagination behind the singing is already there, but the voice sounds quite different from the Mimi I heard her sing in Rome in the 1930's and not I swear so beautiful; the timbre is more nasal, that unclouded warmth hardly perceptible. McCormack's "Champs paterà" was issued here as VB7: a dull aria, I fear, and sung strongly but not caressingly: it seems sad this lovely tenor could not be better represented. On the other hand the next item, No. 4, shows Frances Alda at the top of her form in a meltingly beautiful, artistic and discreet version of Manon Lescaut's contemplative aria, with a wonderful soaring to the B flat and return to F. Ruffo's tremendous voice is not ill represented in this chunk of *Tosca*, for it shows both the menacing power of his Scarpia and his cantabile style, but the extract, wanting Tosca's yells of terror, ends lamely. The orchestra in the Ponchielli is very groany: the aforementioned menace and power are finely caught however. Slezak's caressing and romantic account of the charming "Magic notes" (also made by Caruso) deserves inclusion: it was also on VA22. Caruso's Des Grieux once more delights, but this is Puccini's hero and how much better it suits him. This is a marvellously artistic performance compared to Gigli's yet, surely, allowing for recording, even more seductive as sheer sensuous sound. This again seems to me a definitive choice.

VOLUME III. *Recit.: Che dicono mai? Aria: Deh, ch'io ritorno* from "L'Africana", Act 4 (Meyerbeer). Enrico Caruso (tenor with orchestra). September 16th, 1920. *Un di all'azzurro spazio* from "Andrea Chénier", Act 1 (Giordano). Beniamino Gigli (tenor with orchestra). October 5th, 1923. *Allons, que j'essaie a mon tour*: *Card Song: En vain pour éviter les réponses* from "Carmen", Act 3 (Bizet). Mary Garden (soprano with orchestra). November 5th, 1929. *Senta's Ballad: Yo-ho-hoe!* from "The Flying Dutchman", Act 2 (Wagner). Florence Austral (soprano), Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. August, 1928. *Recit.: Non mi lasciare: Aria: O muto asil del pianto* from "Guglielmo Tell", Act 4 (Rossini). Giovanni Martinelli (tenor with orchestra). February 1st, 1923. *Recit.: Io muojo! Trio: Non imprecare* from "La Forza del Destino", Act 4 (Verdi). Rosa Ponselle (soprano), Giovanni Martinelli (tenor), Esio Pinza (bass) with orchestra. January 18th, 1928.

SIDE 1.

The darker, denser Caruso with the occasional heavy intake of breath sings the rather dull Meyerbeer aria with the utmost intensity and heroism. Gigli's splendid declamation of *Chenier's Improvviso* is too well known to need more than praise: Gigli at his best. Mary Garden's histrionic power and strange but vivid French make this card scene unforgettable; she savours every bar of it. Austral sounds a stunningly good Senta; the ballad, as all too rarely, comes magnificently to life, yet the control is faultless. The *Tell* aria is not exciting in itself, but it does show off some of Martinelli's finest qualities, the bright, silvery timbre and the intense heroic phrasing. The wonderful performance of the trio from the end of *Forza* is again a record so well known one need hardly comment, except that it provides proof that this *Forza* of 1928 was indeed dazzling. It is the solitary Ponselle representation by the way, but very true to her.

VOLUME III, SIDE 2. *O mon maître* from "Don Quichotte", Act 5 (Massenet). Theodore Chaliapine (bass), Olive Klime (soprano with orchestra). April 7th, 1927. *Ed ora a voi! Mad Scene: Bianca e bionda* from "Hamlet", Act 4 (Thomas). Amelita Galli-Curci (soprano with orchestra). December 28th, 1925. *O don fatale* from "Don Carlo", Act 3 (Verdi). Sigrd Onegin (contralto with orchestra). March 4th, 1929. *Jaroslava's Aria* from "Prince Igor", Act 1 (Borodin). Nina Kochetz (soprano with orchestra). April 12th, 1928. *Se il mio nome* from "Il Barbiere di Siviglia", Act 1 (Rossini). Tito Schipa (tenor with orchestra). September 10th, 1920. H.M.V. CSLP502 (12 in., 42s. 6d.).

Chaliapin doubling the roles of Sancho and Quixotte and half speaking much of the time in strange Russian-French makes an astonishingly vivid impression in the last scene of Massenet's opera (the soprano vision of Dulcinea gleams steadily enough at the end). A long excerpt; but of the utmost historical interest and explaining to those who did not hear him—he last did it here in the early 1930's at the Lyceum—something of the great actor-singer's hypnotic powers. The representation of Galli-Curci is disappointing. Her *Mad Scene*, with a badly timed cadenza lacks even the pathos of Melba's and lacks character altogether, besides being in Italian, with unclear words. Of course some of the peerless, effortless "floated" or glinting coloratura is on show; also the occasional sleepy, caressing cantilena, like a nightingale half asleep. But compared to her pre-electric and still dazzling "Una voce" or the *Sonnambula* or *Linda* solos, this choice seems not to give us anywhere near the best of an artist whose gramophone legend is rightly fabulous. Sigrd Onegin, the great Berlin contralto, is well captured in the sculptural grandeur of her singing style and dramatic musicianship, though the recording is as dead as a mattress: a good souvenir. Nina Kochetz brings such marvellous poetic sense and wistful appeal to the Borodin aria and such an unusual timbre that it makes this side, for me, a joy to cherish; the vocalisation *per se* may strike you as odd among bel canto gems, but the aria seems glorious and I have yet not heard it equalled. If room could be found only for one Schipa I suppose this is as good as several others. It tells those who did not hear him what he was: a vocetina, exquisitely used, full voice, half voice, messa

di voce and all. The swell and diminuendo on the G are among the most purely beautiful bits of voice management in the whole series.

VOLUME IV. Finch'han del vino (Act 1); *Serenata: Deb, vieni alla finestra* (Act 2) from "Don Giovanni" (Mozart). Ezio Pinza (bass with orchestra). March 28th, 1930. *Dove sono* from "Le Nozze di Figaro", Act 3 (Mozart). Tiana Lemnitz (soprano), Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. February 24th, 1935. *Recit.: Don Ottavio! Aria: Or sai, chi l'onore* from "Don Giovanni", Act 1 (Mozart). Frida Leider (soprano with orchestra). May 11th, 1928. *Winterstürme wichen* from "Die Walküre", Act 1 (Wagner). Lauritz Melchior (tenor), Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. April 17th, 1938. *Ozean, du Ungeheuer* from "Oberon", Act 2 (Weber). Kirsten Flagstad (soprano), Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. October 17th, 1937. *Herr Kavaller!* from "Der Rosenkavalier", Act 2 (R. Strauss). Alexander Kipnis (bass), Elise Ruzicka (mezzo-soprano), Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Orthmann. April 13th, 1931.

SIDE 1

This brings us to records which were widely popular and must exist in thousands still in home collections (as opposed to connoisseurs' corners). Pinza's voice was a bass and much of the effect of his Don Giovanni was due to Toscanini's dash and the singer's splendid presence. When this record appeared it created a sensation for the speed and vividness of the Champagne aria. The *Serenade* is also good, if too strict—think of the liberties which used to be taken in it by say Tita Ruffo, was he quite wrong? Lemnitz's creamy tone and feminine charm made her a lovely Pamina and Countess, but her attack is not so perfect that this is the last word in "Dove sono's", at which quite a few present-day Countesses could give her a race. On the other hand the controlled passion and attack of Leider's Donna Anna seems to me unsurpassed even by Welitsch: it also shows you why she was such an Isolde—her evenness of scale, with thrilling notes throughout it. Melchior, item 5, is not very happily represented here; his lyrical moments were not really his best, the Wagnerian spring night sounds like an old hurdy-gurdy and the episode wants to be crowned by Lotte Lehman bursting in with "Du bist der Lenz", instead of a tame full stop. Flagstad is so much still with us that no comment is needed on her utterly gorgeous "Ozean". The side ends with the Ochs and Anina episode from *Rosenkavalier*—a famous issue in its day, though surely Richard Mayer's rather than Kipnis's was the Ochs to preserve? As it is the fine Russian bass's only appearance here, we may be grateful though I'd have chosen differently—and I think to-day Ludwig Weber's version of the scene is as good or indeed better; besides, the lusciousness of the orchestral part is half the fun and in the early thirties that was still the weak part of any such recording.

VOLUME IV, SIDE 2. *Bell Song: La-bas dans la forêt* from "Lakmé", Act 2 (Delibes). Lily Pons (soprano with orchestra). December 8th, 1930. *Morro ma prima in grazia* from "Un Ballo in Maschera", Act 3 (Verdi). Elisabeth Rethberg (soprano with orchestra). January 30th, 1930. *Recit.: Plebe, patriai! Aria: Plango sa voi* from "Simone Boccanegra", Act 3 (Verdi). Lawrence Tibbett (baritone), Giovanni Martinelli (tenor), Rose Bampton (soprano), Roberts Nicholson (baritone), members of Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. May 3rd, 1939. *Ahi si, ben mio col'essere* from "Il Trovatore",

Act 3 (Verdi). Jussi Björling (tenor), orchestra conducted by Nils Grevillius. October 13th, 1938. *La mamma morta* from "Andrea Chenier", Act 3 (Giordano). Rosa Raisa (soprano), members of La Scala Orchestra, Milan, conducted by Franco Ghione. June 6th, 1933. *Recit.: Sorta e la notte; Aria: Ernani! Ernani, involami* from "Ernani", Act 1 (Verdi). Ina Souez (soprano), orchestra conducted by Alberto Erede. July 9th, 1936. H.M.V. CSLP503 (12 in., 42s. 6d.).

Lily Pons was due for inclusion of course, with her big Met. success to be remembered. Her *Bell Song*, though here shorn of the lovely introduction, is one of her better records, though to my mind neither truly first rate nor artistic singing. After it comes singing which is both. Rethberg's Verdi is classically beautiful, intense and well in focus vocally and dramatically. This is a throw-back to Destinn-class singing. The great ensemble in the Doge's Palace from *Boccanegra* (also made by the Sadler's Wells company) is a dry recording of what was evidently a hot performance. Tibbett intones mightily, Martinelli cleaves through with tense tone, Rose Bampton sings the descending daughter's part with a warm and womanly soprano quality: obviously a souvenir worth having for New York audiences, not to put it any higher. Björling as Manrico is also welcome—an aria very finely sung: though as he is still so much a modern recording artist, would it not have been more interesting to make a place here for a record more "historical"? Raisa, a lovely artist who came to London much too late, is already past her best here too in Magdalena's plea to Gérard. You can hear how she really belonged to a great race of divas, but the solo lacks "go" as done here. Ina Souez, a Glyndebourne Donna Anna, was also a lovely Verdian soprano as those who heard her in the *Requiem* under Beecham will know. She never really had her chances here—and so I welcome the lilting *Ernani* cavatina; but did she not make the cabaletta to it, as Ponselle did, and wouldn't finally one rather have Ponselle's version, however faint now? Still, this is beautiful momento.

VOLUME V. Depuis le jour from "Louise", Act 3 (Charpentier). Dorothy Maynor (soprano), Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. October 20th, 1940. *D'amour l'ardente flamme* from "La Damnation de Faust", Act 4 (Berlioz). Rose Bampton (soprano), R.C.A. Victor Orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. December 6th, 1940. *Divinites du Styx* from "Alceste", Act 1 (Gluck). Helen Traubel (soprano), R.C.A. Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles O'Connell. June 5th, 1940. *Aller! Scintille diamant* from "Les Contes d'Hoffmann", Act 2 (Offenbach). Leonard Warren (baritone), R.C.A. Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. September 4th, 1941. *Vous étiez, ce que vous n'êtes plus* from "Le Tableau Parlant" (Gretry). Maggie Teyte (soprano), R.C.A. Victor Orchestra conducted by Jean Paul Morel. September 5th, 1947. *Recit.: Sedizioso voci! Casta Diva* from "Norma", Act 1 (Bellini). Zinka Milanov (soprano), R.C.A. Victor Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Frieder Weissmann. April 16th, 1945.

SIDE 1

First, three American singers hardly known here. Dorothy Maynor the Negro soprano was more an oratorio than an opera singer. Considering which other Louises were available this may seem an odd choice; but the lovely lyrical fervour of the voice (not to mention the throbbing "South Pacific" string-surge effects in the background) helps to make a likeable account of the aria.

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mezzo to a soprano after we heard her first in London. Here is a beautiful, smooth and finely pronounced account of the Marguerite-in-sorrow scene, one of the best now available. Helen Traubel's majestic style and thrilling voice are soundly represented. Perhaps you'd have preferred something Wagnerian for this great singer for she does not sound deeply stirred. But the choice has the charm of novelty for us, over here. Warren on the other hand might be far better represented—he has made so much since—than by this very competent minor grade aria. And it seems odd indeed to wait till 1947 to represent Maggie Teyte (Debussy's own *Mélisande*). Her Grétry contribution is charming and "like" her; but hardly explains why she holds the position she does in the half century of song. Milanov's *Casta diva* (without cabaletta, unlike Sembrich's) sounds a trifle laboured and cupped up—less good than some of her arias from *Forza* or *Aida*, but again the reason for inclusion may be due to availability of those as opposed to this, which has chorus of a kind.

VOLUME V. SIDE 2. *Se m'amī ancor: Ai nostri monti* from "Il Trovatore", Act 4 (Verdi). *Cio Elmo* (mezzo-soprano), *Beniamino Gigli* (tenor), orchestra conducted by *Umberto Berrettoni*. January 23rd, 1940. *Ahi dite alla giovine* from "La Traviata", Act 2 (Verdi). *Licia Albanese* (soprano), *Robert Merrill* (baritone), *R.C.A. Victor Orchestra* conducted by *Frieder Weissmann*. February 8th, 1946. *Nessun dorma* from "Turandot", Act 3 (Puccini). *Jussi Björling* (tenor), orchestra conducted by *Nils Grevillius*. 1944. *Summertime* from "Porgy and Bess" (Gershwin). *Eleanor Steber* (soprano), orchestra conducted by *Jay Blackton*. February 25th, 1946. *Non so più cosa son* from "Le Nozze di Figaro", Act 1 (Mozart). *Risë Stevens* (mezzo-soprano), *R.C.A. Victor Orchestra* conducted by *Fritz Reiner*. March 21st, 1951. *Cradle Song* from "Hubicka", Act 1 (Smetana). *Jarmila Novotna* (soprano), *R.C.A. Victor Orchestra* conducted by *Frieder Weissmann*. January 9th, 1946. *Recit.: Tombe degli avi miei; Aria: Fra poco a me ricovero* from "Lucia di Lammermoor", Act 3 (Donizetti). *Jan Peerce* (tenor), *R.C.A. Victor Symphony Orchestra* conducted by *Wilfred Pelletier*. September 11th, 1941. H.M.V. CSLP504 (12 in., 425. 6d.).

In "Home to our mountains" Gigli sounds "sobby" and un-Verdian after some of the tenoring heard earlier; Miss Elmo, loved in the States, sounds good, but the whole excerpt seems hardly up to inclusion in such an album. The *Traviata* is representative of fair modern-style Verdi, Merrill very promising: Albanese below say Hempel or Melba in style, precision of attack and line, but affecting and vivid—quite modern recording here. Björling's "Nessun Dorma" is a little too effortful, less good than Gigli's early version, but welcome though it follows on to the *Traviata* duet badly. Eleanor Steber sings most touchingly Clara's lullaby from *Porgy*: it is not the odd choice it might seem—for one gets her quality of voice—unless we'd prefer her as Elsa. Risé Stevens is also the Cherubino in the Glyndebourne *Figaro* but sounds much better here, "attractive" in a word, if not quite a match for Elisabeth Schumann; the whole concept of the song is vital. Novotna earns inclusion and this is unfamiliar, attractive as music: the two lullabies from Smetana's *The Kiss* are beautifully sung. Peerce's loud, fast vibrato and slightly nasal placing is not very pleasing in this limp, lachry-

mose aria from the end of *Lucia* (a treat for Mario or Di Lucia). It brings to rather a second rate finish the course begun with Tamagno in Vol. 1.

I foresee three classes of persons who will react poorly to the above anthology. First, the very young who have never heard pre-electrics and who will go into peals of laughter—just as they do at famous silent films—on hearing high notes, especially those of sopranos, sound like someone whistling up a speaking tube. But let them listen to the chest register: that tells a tale all right. Second, those who do not care for singing at all. Thirdly, those who care so much that they already cherish all or most of these on 78's which they will maintain are in some way superior, with a magical bloom, etc. etc., not recaptured

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in dubbings on vinylite. About this we shall have to argue at some other time. I am not saying this class of persons suffer from delusion entirely, but the benefits of microgroove recording are not to be gainsaid. This, however, is a whole separate problem and the main thing surely is to welcome so generous a saving of old masters, rather than to complain that, like the cleaned pictures in the National Gallery, they don't seem the same.

Finally, I would repeat that you should give the selector and the disc the benefit of the doubt; by which I mean that each has been chosen for some reason and that if you immediately do not see the point, it is quite possible that the fault is in your ears, which will presently be opened. I trust we shall have other such issues before long.

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ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

By

PAUL BRYANT . ROGER FISKE . TREVOR HARVEY
PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE . MALCOLM MACDONALD . ANDREW PORTER
ALEX ROBERTSON . LIONEL SALTER



ORCHESTRAL

BEETHOVEN. Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 19. Wilhelm Kempff (piano), Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Paul van Kempen. D.G.G. DG16071 (10 in., 29s. 7½d.).

Backhaus, V.P.O., Krauss (2/53) LX3083
Solomon, Philharmonia, Cluytens (9/53) (H)BLP1024
Badura-Skoda, Vienna Op., Scherchen (5/55) WLP5302

Kempff gives a curiously ineffective performance of the first movement of this Concerto. *Allegro con brio* is Beethoven's marking. In this reading it is a cautious *allegro* that is taken, while as for *brio* there is not more than an occasional touch of it. Some of it, running passages especially, is so under-played that it lacks clarity and sparkle—almost as though the pianist were playing quietly to himself at the orchestral rehearsal. This, we know, is Beethoven's first Piano Concerto, in spite of its number, but its debt to Mozart can be over-emphasised. In a rather waffley sleeve-note Kempff says: "Let us accompany Beethoven at a respectful distance"; but this is more like servility than respect.

The slow movement is very slow. One would have thought that a pianist of Kempff's experience would have learnt that it is always a mistake to start an early Beethoven slow movement as slowly as you at first feel it should go. Here the opening melody scarcely hangs together when it is played by the orchestra, let alone when the piano, with its lack of sustaining power, takes over. Solomon (to name only one excellent rival) chooses a speed that allows

his conductor to play the opening bars most beautifully.

The Finale is lively and makes its effect with a good deal of cheerfulness, but by this time it is too late, I feel, for me to recommend this performance. Personally, I should go for Solomon or Backhaus.

T.H.

BEETHOVEN. Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73, "Emperor". Vladimir Horowitz (piano), R.C.A. Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. H.M.V. ALP1280 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

BEETHOVEN. Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, "Emperor", Op. 73. Robert Casadesus (piano), Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Philips ABL3142 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

Curzon, L.P.O., Szell (9/50) LXT2506
Gieseking, Philharmonia, Karajan (10/52) 33CX1010

Fischer, Philharmonia, Furtwaengler (6/53) (H)ALP1051

Serkin, Philadelphia, Ormandy (10/53) 33CX1070

Backhaus, V.P.O., Krauss (1/54) LXT2839

Badura-Skoda, V. Op., Scherchen (7/54) WLP5114

de Groot, Hague P.O., Otterloo (5/55) ABL3032

Kempff, Berlin P.O., Kempen (7/55) DGM18131

Solomon, Philharmonia, Menges (1/56) (H)ALP1300

On the H.M.V. disc Horowitz and Reiner share a rather hurried view of the first movement of the *Emperor*; nothing of brilliant piano-playing is missing, and nothing of good orchestral playing, but a good deal of the majesty of the music fails to be communicated. Later the brilliance is less in evidence; and in the finale Horowitz even sounds curiously undecided. But in any event his piano tone, as recorded, is very distinctly below par in quality and above par in volume. It is certainly possible to secure a good quality of sound from this disc as far as the orchestra is concerned, but only at the expense of allowing the piano to jangle quite severely whenever playing.

Altogether more success attends the new Philips version of the concerto. Here the piano and orchestra can both be listened

to comfortably on the same setting of the controls, though that setting must take into account a slightly harsh string tone and a rather low general level of volume. But the performance ultimately—and satisfactorily—disclosed is a very fine one, most successful where the other is least so, in the opening movement. Here Casadesus is at his most effective best, and many details in the orchestral playing, too, betray a notable care on Ormandy's part for the breadth and the dignity of the music. The success is not, I think quite carried to the end of the work; in the slow movement Casadesus seeks to keep Beethoven's *adagio* moving by pressing on when the music is static, with a small *rit.* and a *tempo* at what sometimes seems like each barline—a normal and legitimate enough device, goodness knows, but here carried to an extent which could end by almost irritating the listener. And the device has, too, a minor practical disadvantage: on some of those barlines the strings have a pizzicato chord, and with half an eye on the conductor and, inevitably, half an ear on Casadesus's *rit.* the resulting plonk is here often something less than unanimous. No such mannerism spoils the finale; but there does seem rather to be a lack of drive throughout this movement, never a particularly easy one to bring off.

The general virtues of the performance, however, are very considerable indeed, and this new Philips *Emperor* ranks quite highly in the above comprehensive list of available versions. It does not, however, substantially shake my preference, in that list, for the H.M.V. of Solomon and the Philharmonia: a most beautiful performance, well and very clearly recorded.

M.M.

BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 4 in B flat, Op. 60. Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93. Pro Musica Symphony conducted by Jonel Perlea. Vox PL8740 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Symphony No. 4:

L.P.O., Solti (5/51) LXT2564

V.P.O., Furtwängler (6/53) (H)ALP1059

Belgian Rad. S.O., Andre (3/54) LGX86010

Concertgebouw, Krips (3/54) LXT2874

N.B.C., Toscanini (7/54) (H)ALP1145

Philharmonia, Karajan (9/55) 33CX1278

L.P.S.O., Scherchen (4/56) WLP20003

Symphony No. 8:

Conservatoire, Munch (11/51) LX3053

R.P.O., Beecham (6/53) 33CX1039

V.P.O., Boehm (10/53) LXT2824

N.B.C., Toscanini (3/54) (H)ALP1108

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L.P.S.O., Scherchen (8/55) WLP5362

Berlin P.O., Fricsay (1/56) DGM18130

The Fourth Symphony is given a careful performance, and responds to it well in the slower sections. In particular, in the first movement's introduction, which raises expectancy only partially fulfilled when the *allegro* gets rather undramatically under way. All goes well in the middle movements; but again the finale seems on the tepid side—with the bassoon the only gainer from the gentlemanly tempo (in his explosive moment here the bassoon is to be saved, however, not by careful tempos, or by extreme instrumental skill, but only by the personal intervention of St. Cecilia—I think it was Cecil James who once said that he

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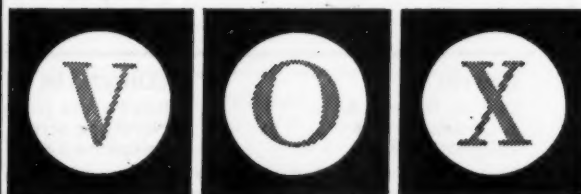
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had never in his life succeeded in playing the passage right at rehearsal, and yet had never failed to bring it off in performance).

Similar qualities invest this version of the Eighth Symphony; it is musical, careful, and unexciting, with on the whole the middle movements coming off best; not quite all the joy of the finale is communicated.

Throughout the recording is extremely clean, though with rather less body than the very best of modern records. The violins, in melodic passages, sound less well-nourished than they probably did in the studio; the note of the timpani sometimes tends to be ill-defined, a point which matters in both symphonies; the 'cellos and basses do not quite balance with the other strings in the *Allegretto* of the Eighth Symphony; and the resonance is cut off rather sharply at the end of each movement in the Fourth. Even so, the recording is certainly tonally a satisfactory one.

There is, however, substantial competition in the case of both symphonies. The Eighth in particular offers several good versions, each with a very material claim to distinction: Beecham's Columbia, for a performance yet to be bettered, with recording only just beginning to show its age; Steinberg's Capitol, for a generally excellent performance and recording; Scherchen's not quite so richly recorded Nixa, for an electrifying performance of the finale (the first movement is less successful); and Fricsay's D.G.G., for a smooth recording of a not very exciting performance. And van Kempen's Philips is also a smooth recording of a not very exciting performance, but is in rather a secluded situation on the fourth side of a two-disc set of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony. If choice between the other versions is still uncertain, it may be assisted by consideration of the symphonies coupled: Beecham, Schubert's *Unfinished*; Steinberg, Beethoven's Fifth; Scherchen, Beethoven's Second; and Fricsay, Beethoven's First.

In the case of the Fourth Symphony, choice seems to me to be rather easier. The new disc offers the third single-sided version; short of an overriding superiority, it would not now be reasonable to recommend any more cumbersome and expensive format. So my choice would be for Scherchen's Nixa WLP20003; a forceful, well-recorded version, with the Beethoven Fifth Symphony for backing. M.M.

BRAHMS. Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Guido Cantelli**. H.M.V. BLP1083 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

Concertgebouw, Szell (6/52) LXT2676
Halle, Barbirolli (5/53) (H) BLP1015
V.P.O., Boehm (12/53) LXT2843
N.B.C., Toscanini (10/54) (H) ALP1166
Hamburg P.O., Keilberth (2/55) LGX66035
N.Y. S.O., Walter (6/55) ABR4031

Third time lucky: on previous occasions H.M.V.'s versions of this symphony have been hindered in their effect by recording that sounds dimmer to-day than it did originally. Now comes one that ranks with the best.

It is a beautifully played version, too. The Philharmonia are in good form, and Cantelli takes a warm and lyrical view of

the whole. Particularly so in the first movement, where perhaps some degree of tension is sacrificed to an effect of tonal beauty; and where perhaps, too, a better overall structural balance would be obtained by making, rather than omitting, the first repeat. The second movement Cantelli keeps going, and allows full scope to the excellences of individual playing—woodwind and strings alike here play as smoothly and mellifluously as surely they ever have, or could. So in the third movement; but in the fourth, after an appropriately restrained introduction, drama is finally let loose, and it makes an exciting climax. At the very end, though: could not the strings usefully just have pointed the thematic allusion to the first movement in their descending semiquaver alternations? Played without pointing, as Cantelli does (and many others do) the thematic allusion is simply not present to the ear; and Brahms almost certainly did not mean it to be visible in the score but kept secret from the listener.

But this is a very fine version indeed of the symphony, matched, I would suggest, in the above list only by the Decca of Karl Böhm and the Vienna Philharmonic. Between these two—and these two only—I would have great difficulty in choosing, were it not for the price differential. That, however, would seem to me to clinch the day in favour of the newcomer. M.M.

BRAHMS. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Herbert von Karajan**. Columbia 33CX1362 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

L.S.O., Krips (11/50) LXT2517
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (8/53) (H) ALP1029
New York P.O., Walter (10/54) ABL3008
New York Stadium S.O., Bernstein (12/54) AXTL1066
Berlin P.O., Jochum (10/55) DGM18183
Philharmonic Prom. Orch., Boult (7/56) NCL16008

This is a very happy combination indeed of first-class performance and recording. Karajan succumbs to dawdling nowhere, but on the contrary propels the symphony irresistibly. His view of the first movement is a broad one, that might now and again be thought to hold it rather on the leash, particularly towards its end; but in the finale this is not so at all, and a fine climax is achieved. The slow movement throws into prominence the fine orchestral playing that in fact illuminates the whole symphony; the third movement, too, is completely convincing.

Throughout the recording is beautifully-toned and spacious. Its very excellence, however, does help to disclose two minor unhappineses of balance. One is only momentary: at the beginning of the finale the first oboe seems astonishingly reticent, and indeed in the very first statement of the passacaglia's ground he is so overshadowed by his partner that the unaided ear would have difficulty in deciding just what was the tune. The other point concerns the trumpets—who must, certainly, be reticent in Brahms, viewing their Haydn-like parts with appropriate reserve; but surely not so reticent as they are made to appear here? They should, I think, add a little more brilliance to the tutti than they are on this occasion allowed.

I have very little hesitation, however, in recommending this as in general the best available version of the symphony; Karajan's performance is the equal of Walter's, which I have hitherto preferred, and his recording is fractionally superior. Only slightly behind these two versions is Sir Adrian Boult's Nixa; and it may be that the discrepancy will seem even smaller if the buyer knows that the disc includes also the Brahms *St. Anthony Variations*. But, considering the symphony only, the new disc, I would suggest, has it. M.M.

BORODIN. Symphony No. 2 in B minor. Symphony No. 3 in A minor, "Unfinished" (orch. Glazounov). Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Nicolai Malko**. H.M.V. CLP1075 (12 in., 33s. 11½d.).

Coupled as above:
Suisse, Ansermet (4/55) LXT5022
Symphony No. 2:
Philharmonia, Kletski (10/54) 33CX1167
Minneapolis S.O., Dorati (2/55) MGS004
N.Y. S.O., Mitropoulos (2/56) ABL3079

We now have two extremely well recorded performances of a whole Borodin symphony and a bit of a symphony on one disc. Malko's is the more conventional reading of the 2nd Symphony—the usual fast-as-you-can-play-it speed for the Scherzo, for instance. Ansermet takes a broader view throughout and the Scherzo is leisurely by comparison with any of the others listed above. But it does happen to be at about the speed suggested by the metronome mark in the score! After getting used to it I find it much better than the customary speed and I now really dislike hearing conductors and orchestras tearing through the movement.

Malko's first movement suffers slightly from too varied speeds. Ansermet is more consistent and the result hangs together better and sounds more like the first movement of a symphony. There is lovely playing from the Philharmonia in the slow movement, but here there are places where Malko seems unwilling to let the music move on: and surely the big tune, when it comes on all the strings towards the end, wants more feeling. In short, I find Ansermet's reading both more consistent and more satisfying.

In the two movements of the 3rd Symphony honours are more even. The first is really not much of a symphonic movement, a very slight affair, but Malko and the Philharmonia between them give it character, while the flexibility of treatment is admirable too. The Philharmonia, almost needless to say, plays the 5/8 Scherzo with very great brilliance and delicacy, while the clarinet soloist (presumably Bernard Walton) at the start of the Trio plays perfectly beautifully.

The speed of this Trio is a good deal slower than in Ansermet's performance, rather disproportionately so. Perhaps that accounts for the fact that Decca throw in the Prince Igor Overture as well—which is quite a throw-in and will inevitably weigh in making any choice.

The quality of H.M.V.'s recording is absolutely excellent, a lovely orchestral

sound and an honest balance. Decca's is also of their best. They will forgive me, I hope, if I mention two touches of carelessness which I ought to have mentioned when I reviewed their disc. In the first movement of the 3rd Symphony the clash of horns and 'cellos at figure 5 is important and both should be heard (as they are on the new H.M.V.): and at the 8th bar after figure 9 they have left in a timpani note which should not be there. Having done my duty, let me add that neither of these slight lapses detracts in the least seriously from their admirable record which, with the Igor Overture, is such good value too.

As to other versions of the 2nd Symphony, you are safe with any of them except the Mitropoulos, which is poorly recorded.

T.H.

CHOPIN. *Barcarolle in F sharp minor, Op. 60. Nocturne No. 18 in E major, Op. 62. Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52.* Benno Moiseiwitsch (piano).

RACHMANINOV. *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 43.* Benno Moiseiwitsch (piano), *Philharmonia Orchestra* conducted by *Hugo Rignold.* H.M.V. CLP1072 (12 in., 33s. 11½d.).

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini:
Katchen, L.P.O., Boulton (9/54) LXT2862
Frugoni, Vienna Pro Musica, Byrns (6/56) PL9650

In the Barcarolle there are moments when one suspects that Moiseiwitsch's technique is not quite as assured as it used to be. And then he suddenly tosses off something villainously difficult with fluent ease and one realises what a wonderful pianist he still is. He makes the Nocturne ravishingly beautiful, gives a fine account of the best of the Ballades and in the Rachmaninov Rhapsody is arguably as good as Katchen and much better than his other rival in this work. I do not wish to make too much of the imperfections of the Barcarolle for he plays much of it very well. But I did not feel that he quite integrates the big A major tune ("poco più mosso") with the rest of the movement, a common failing in this piece, and some of the runs are a little smudgy. But the last page is quite miraculously well played. I found the orchestra a little too much in the background in the Rachmaninov, and perhaps the Katchen-Boulton version just has the edge over Moiseiwitsch-Rignold. But this is a disc that will give a lot of pleasure to a lot of people.

R.F.

DVORAK. *Symphonic Variations, Op. 78.*

TCHAIKOVSKY. *Variations on a Theme from Suite No. 3 in G major, Op. 55.* *Philharmonia Orchestra* conducted by *Sir Malcolm Sargent.* H.M.V. ALP1372 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Dvorak Variations:
R.P.O., Beecham (6/55) ABL3047
Tchaikovsky Variations:
Par. Cons., Schuricht (2/53) LXT2761

A good recording of Dvořák's engaging Variations is particularly welcome, for the earlier Beecham disc is not of very good quality—such a poor string sound, in particular. This new one is always perfectly

acceptable in its sound and in one thing, soft string tone, it is very good indeed; in the Theme, for instance, and in the *pp* Variation 2.

These Variations are tricky to conduct in one particular way, that here and there they need great judgment and skill in managing the leads into new variations, with *rallentandi* that are not at all easy to bring off smoothly and convincingly. I need hardly say that Sir Malcolm gets round these awkward corners admirably and indeed his whole account of the work is most attractive. And what an attractive work! Perhaps the variations are each too short and perhaps there are too many of them: but how can one grumble when each brings some new delight?

The ever-popular Tchaikovsky Variations on the reverse get an equally enjoyable performance. If you prefer to have the whole Suite from which they come, then I would recommend Boulton's excellent version with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Decca LXT5099), but for an attractive coupling of two sets of variations, this new disc is much recommended.

T.H.

FRANCK. *Symphony in D minor. Philadelphia Orchestra* conducted by *Eugene Ormandy.* Philips ABR4048 (10 in., 28s. 8d.).

Paris Conservatoire, Munich (6/52) LXT2692
San Francisco S.O., Montoux (3/53) (H) ALP1019
French Nat. Rad., Cluytens (9/53) SSCX1064
St. Louis S.O., Golschmann (1/54) CTL7044
V.P.O., Furtwangler (4/54) LXT2905
Belgian R.O., Andre (1/55) LGX86030
N.B.C. S.O., Cantelli (2/55) (H) ALP1219
Bamberg S.O., Lehmann (5/55) DGM18188

This is the first appearance of Franck's Symphony on a 10-inch disc and that is at any rate some guarantee that the conductor doesn't hang about, as some like to do: and I think most of us would agree that that is a good thing. Indeed, I like Ormandy's performance very much, with its most expressive string playing and its sense of going clearly to a telling climax in the first movement. The *Allegretto* is swift and none the worse for that, and the Finale—well here, perhaps, rather more breadth might be welcome, a touch more nobility. Yet by keeping it all moving Ormandy does avoid the over-inflation that can make the climax of this movement so tiresome.

The recording gives us the sound of an orchestra in a hall rather than in one's room. That is not meant at all as an adverse criticism but merely as a description of the sort of sound it is. Personally I like it. What I do very much approve of is the admirable orchestral perspective throughout. Every instrument reaches the ear from its proper seat in the orchestra and even the *cor anglais* of the middle movement sounds where it ought to sound. The soft string tone is most expressive to hear and there is a really adequate string bass to the sound.

Looking back over past issues, I find it difficult to give a clear recommendation based on both performance and recorded quality. But since all those I would consider take both sides of a whole 12-inch, now shown to be extravagant, this new one can clearly be strongly recommended as very good value indeed.

T.H.

GRIEG. *Concert Overture, "In Autumn", Op. 11. Old Norwegian Romance with Variations, Op. 51.*
SCHUBERT. *Symphony No. 6 in C major, D.589.* *Royal Philharmonic Orchestra* conducted by *Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart.* Columbia 33CX1963 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Symphony No. 6:
L.S.O., Krips (8/51) LXT2585
Bamberg S.O., Keilberth (4/55) LGM66026

There is not much in the way of competition with this Schubert Sixth—the Keilberth version is coarse, with only its cheapness to recommend it (as R.F. said at the time), and the Krips, though stylish, suffers from a horrid booming quality and a pronounced hum (which wasn't mentioned in the review). It cannot honestly be claimed that this is, for Beecham, any more than a fair routine performance: we have all heard much more sensitive and vital phrasing from him than this. In fact, in some details this is distressingly casual—e.g. the scurried, perfunctory treatment of the Trio of the Scherzo (*what a speed!*), and the unrhythmic playing of the theme of the *Andante*. As if to match up, the recording (distinctly light in bass) is no more than reasonable.

The other side is a better proposition altogether. It sounds a more recent recording (though one can be wrong about such things); and not only is the choice of works most interesting, but Beecham is back in his old vital form. *In Autumn* was Grieg's first orchestral work, and though it was later rescored it still shows the composer seeking to fashion an individual idiom away from the formal Leipzig style in which he was trained. The overture is based on the song *The Autumn Storm*, though the expansion is considerable: despite some rather obvious seams in the construction, it makes an agreeable whole. The variations on *Sigurd and the Troll-bridge* (a tune already included in the *Six Norwegian Mountain Melodies* for piano solo) are considerably more mature: originally published in a two-piano version, they were shortened and scored in 1900. Beecham shortens them still further by cutting three of the variations, but the loss is negligible, and the work as we can now hear it points Grieg's rich sense of harmonic and orchestral colouring.

P.B.

HAYDN. *Concerto for 'Cello and Orchestra in D major, Op. 101.*

SCHUMANN. *Concerto for 'Cello and Orchestra in A minor, Op. 129.* *Enrico Mainardi* ('cello), *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, R.I.A.S. Symphony Orchestra, Berlin*, conducted by *Fritz Lehmann.* D.G.G. DGM18222 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Haydn 'Cello Concerto:
Reichardt, Stuttgart Pro Musica, Reinhardt (1/53) PL7390
Fournier, Stuttgart Chamb. Orch., Munchinger (12/54) LXT2968

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Dorner, Stuttgart Pro Musica, Reinhardt (1/54) PL7680
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Gendron, Suisse, Ansermet (3/54) LXT2895
Casals, Prades Festival (7/55) ABR4035

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label designer, and thus to potential purchaser. (A reference in the anonymous sleeve-note to "the modern tendency to reject the viola as a solo instrument, in which capacity it was formerly far more prominent than at present" offers some dating problems; perhaps it was written, no doubt by J. W. Dunne, some time towards the middle of the twenty-first century). Gevaert's arrangement, though, does succeed in making of the Haydn an agreeable nineteenth-century orchestral sound with some rewarding solo 'cello writing; and both these elements are given full expression in the present recording. Mainardi seems fully at home in the Haydn, and the orchestra play most beautifully throughout; only the adoption of a rather pedestrian tempo for the finale separates this performance from the very best. And the recording is not so separated; or if it is, it is only by the frequent intrusion of heavy breathing on, probably, the soloist's part. Wind soloists now and again simply have no option but to snatch an audible breath in a tenth of a second; string soloists are happily free from this necessity, or even, up till now, from having to think about breathing at all—but a new compulsion to do so is being remorselessly inflicted on them by modern microphone technique.

The Schumann is in some slight degree rather less happy than the Haydn. There is still impeccable orchestral playing, but Mainardi occasionally seems to respond only prosaically to the poetic demands of the situation; it is possible to imagine a more entirely compelling flow of golden sound that will one day illuminate a record of this concerto. The recording, too, might usefully have been slightly more brilliant, and perhaps also have allowed the soloist slightly more prominence—in the last few bars, in particular, his arpeggios are quite lost.

For all that, this is a good and workmanlike version of the Schumann; a satisfactory runner-up to that of Maurice Gendron on Decca—a beautifully recorded disc with the Tchaikovsky *Variations on a Rococo Theme* for backing.

In the case of the Haydn the new record comes at a most convenient time to replace the deleted Nixa version by Janigro and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra as a highly recommended version of Haydn-Gevaert. For Haydn plain, Fournier on Decca should indubitably be chosen; his backing is the Boccherini B flat Concerto. M.M.

MAHLER. Symphony No. 6 in A minor. Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Eduard Flipse**. Philips ABL3103-4 (two 12in., 76s. 6d.). Recorded at the Holland Festival, June 25th, 1955.

"My Sixth Symphony", wrote Mahler, "sets riddles whose solution may be attempted only by a generation which has absorbed and completely digested my first five". As if deterred by this, the public at large has so far shown scant interest in the work: performances are exceedingly rare, and this is the first recording to be issued in this country. Two reasons against its more frequent appearance are its vast length—

the finale alone is longer than many a classical symphony—and the enormous orchestral apparatus it requires. What with quintuple woodwind, eight horns, six trumpets, four trombones and tuba, a welter of percussion (including cowbells and distant church bells of unspecified pitch) and the rest, rehearsals come expensive, and almost the only occasion of hearing the symphony nowadays is on some gala occasion—such as this, where the recording was made at the public performance. (Incidentally, I must congratulate the audience who, save for their vociferous applause before and after, give almost no evidence of their presence. English concert-going coughers, please note.) Flipse and the Rotterdam Phil. give a fine, eloquent performance, with such assurance in every detail that almost nothing would have been gained by repeating it under recording studio conditions; and the engineers, though unable to secure the very highest technical standards of reproduction in these circumstances, do a very good job of work. Quite apart from the interest of its being the first available here, this issue may be warmly recommended to all Mahlerians.

The symphony (often called "The Tragic") is autobiographical in an oddly prophetic way, and is cast in a vein of morbid emotionalism. Mahler's wife (who is portrayed in the second subject of the first movement) remonstrated with him at the time for writing *Songs on the death of children* when his own children were happily running about in perfect health; and in the Sixth Symphony the games of the children are represented in the third movement, dying away tragically. The last movement describes the grievous end of his hero—like Strauss, Mahler had an exhibitionist trait of projecting himself into his music—on whom fall three hammer-blows of fate, the last of which fells him like a tree. Mahlerians will admire the breadth of conception, the unified sense of structure, and the bitterness of the lyric portions of the work: others may protest at the turgid orchestration, the self-pitying bombast, the undistinguished nature of some of the material which is developed at such length. But not all of us have so assimilated Mahler's first five symphonies that we can appreciate the archaic mysteries of the Sixth. P.B.

LISZT. Concerto No. 1 in E flat major. Hungarian Fantasia. Geza Anda (piano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Otto Ackermann**. Columbia 33CX1366 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Concerto No. 1:
Cherkassky, Philharmonia, Pistoulari (4/53) (H)BLP1013
Farnadi, V. Op., Scherchen (10/53) WLP5168
Mildner, R.I.A.S. S.O., Rother (10/54) LGX66022
Frugoni, Vienna Pro Musica, Swarowsky (6/54) PLS390
Gilels, A.U.R. S.O., Kondrashin (3/55) MWL308
de Groot, Netherlands R.O., Otterloo (3/55) ABL3026
Foldes, Berlin P.O., Ludwig (3/55) DGM18133
Francois, Par. Cons., Tzipine (4/55) 33CX1238
Kempff, L.S.O., Pistoulari (6/55) LXT5025
Hungarian Fantasia:
Katchen, L.S.O., Gamba (8/56) LXT5164

A.P. has hitherto reviewed the Liszt Concerto and with such care that in dealing with this new one while he is on holiday I

feel a rather inadequate *locum tenens*. This will be, then, only an interim report.

Geza Anda gives a most honest performance of both these works. He rides their technical difficulties well, he does not storm the Concerto in the Colossus-of-the-Key-board manner which contents a good many pianists, he has clearly taken great thought and trouble over the preparation of both works. And yet I cannot get over the impression that here is a fine classical pianist to whom Liszt doesn't come quite naturally. For all the good playing, for example, it never dazzles with its glitter. (It is extraordinary how two pianists can each play a Lisztian *cadenza* apparently equally swiftly and delicately, yet one manages to add an entrancing sheen that eludes the other).

Then go to the *quasi adagio*. There is a *poco a poco più appassionata* which Anda scarcely rises to at all: and this leads to those *recit.* passages which are here just plain dull.

A.P. evidently has a special liking for Emil Gilels's playing in the Concerto, and I agree with him: but what a pity it is so poorly recorded. And I prefer Katchen in the Fantasia, though again, the piano tone is not well caught. Anda's recording is excellent: lovely piano sound and a care for balance that makes a great success even of that difficult passage in the *quasi adagio* of the Concerto. What a pity that Anda has not been able, it seems to me, to add just that something to such good, sound playing. T.H.

MENDELSSOHN. Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90, "Italian". Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, conducted by Eduard van Beinum. Philips SBR6202 (10 in., 24s. od.).

R.P.O., Beecham (3/53) 33C1006
V.S.O., Klemperer (5/53) FL7860
L.S.O., Krips (4/54) LXT2887
Minneapolis S.O., Dorati (6/54) MGS0010
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (5/56) (H)ALP1267
Philharmonia, Cantelli (3/56) (H)ALP1325

Good playing by the Concertgebouw but, truth to tell, very undistinguished conducting from van Beinum. He plays the first movement very quickly and, what I mind more, with a sense of hurry, leaving little chance for grace or charm, of which, surely, this movement is full. I do give him, however, a very large good mark for playing the repeat, almost never done. The movement needs it, to give it its proper proportion in the symphony as a whole: and we hear 23 bars of delightful Mendelssohn before the *da capo* which most listeners will find they have never heard before.

The second movement goes through without great distinction and the next one has a quickening of the tempo at the Trio which seems to me unnecessary as well as unjustified. The Finale is an unreserved success, taken at a great speed, which, of course, this movement stands, and played by the Concertgebouw woodwind with virtuosity. But in general it is a commonplace sort of performance compared with Cantelli's fresh and musical reading of the work with the Philharmonia.

The recording, too, does not compare with the H.M.V.—or several others. There is a lack of real *piano* (let alone *pp*), though how much this particular fault is due to the players, I wouldn't like to say. The second movement shows this most clearly. How little difference there is between its *f* opening and the *p* tune that follows: and the very end of this movement is nothing like a *pp*.

Here and there the sound is not very consistent—at the first *ff* in the work, for instance. But the worse thing is the change of orchestral perspective at the start of the Trio of the third movement, where the horns and bassoons, and later the trumpets, are brought right forward and apparently sit themselves in front of the violins. Why, oh why, are recording people allowed to turn up different microphones like this? For that, I presume, is what happened. But it is just not what happens when you listen to a real orchestra.

T.H.

MOZART. Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491. Gina Bachauer (piano), London Orchestra conducted by Alec Sherman. H.M.V. DLP1124 (10 in., 26s. 5d.).

Badura-Skoda, V.S.O., Prohaska (2/54) WLP5007
Curzon, L.S.O., Krige (4/54) LXT2867
Casadesu, Orch., Szell (6/55) ABL3060
Solomon, Philharmonia, Menges (1/56) (H)ALP1316

H.M.V. now lead the field very safely in recordings of this concerto, for they follow their admirable production of Solomon's performance (backed by the A major, K.488) last January with this excellent Bachauer one. Comparison of the two is fascinating, for interpretations are quite different. Many, I am sure, will vote for Solomon and many will far prefer Bachauer (and I am one of them).

The basic difference is that Solomon plays this Concerto with the feeling that there is all the time in the world (so why hurry?), while Gina Bachauer moves it all on with much faster speeds. Solomon convinces because of the beauty of his playing and because he is too great an artist ever to let leisureliness become dullness. All the same, I did sometimes feel that if I weren't enjoying the playing so much I might here and there lose interest. I like Gina Bachauer's real *allegro* for the first movement. Her *Larghetto* is perhaps more questionable (though I don't think anyone would like to lay down the law about what exactly that word means) but it pleases me enormously. How unenterprising of Solomon, by the way, not to decorate those two pauses in any way: and how odd of Bachauer to decorate the first and not the second. The Finale also goes faster in the new performance but is most successfully done.

Interpretation apart, I thought Gina Bachauer's playing most admirable from start to finish. As to accompaniment, the new is more distinguished, the older being not more than reasonably acceptable. But what is so remarkable about the new is the clarity of the instrumental lines, even in the woodwind when the piano is playing. Again, the older does not fail in this matter: but the new is astonishingly better.

As to which you yourself choose—well,

I'm afraid that the only thing to do is by hook or by crook to hear both. Unless you already have the A major, in which event Bachauer's 10-inch is just the thing.

T.H.

RACHMANINOV. Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18.

CHOPIN. Nocturne No. 8 in D flat major, Op. 27, No. 2. Eugene Malinin (piano), Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Ackermann. Columbia 33CX1369 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Concerto No. 2:
Katchen, N.S.O., Fistoulari (8/51) LXT2505
Lympny, Philharmonia, Malko (11/53) (H)CLP1007
Anda, Philharmonia, Galliera (9/54) 33CX1143
de Groot, Hague P.O., Otterloo (12/54) ABL3014
Farnadi, V. Op., Scherchen (1/55) WLP5193
Pennario, St. Louis S.O., Golschmann (10/55) CTL7003
Frugoni, Vienna Pro Musica, Byrns (6/56) PL9650
Curzon, L.P.O., Boulton (6/56) LXT5178
Foldes, Berlin P.O., Ludwig (7/56) DGM18190

Eugene Malinin is the young Soviet pianist who has won a number of prizes at various European festivals, and this is the second recording of his to be made available here. Presumably he gives something like the conventional Soviet performance, and as it is in many respects very different from what we are used to in Western Europe, the disc is of interest quite apart from his good performance and the really wonderful recording quality. At our end of the continent rubato is used much less than it was thirty years ago and more, and much of the playing now judged excellent would have seemed cold and expressionless at the beginning of the century. There has probably been a similar trend in Russia, but not, I think, to anything like the same degree. Opera singers in particular are allowed a license where rhythm is concerned that not even an Italian would expect to-day. There is nothing unmusical about Malinin's rubato; he just uses more of it than we are used to. At two points he slows down the tempo to an astonishing degree; at the return of the main tune in the first movement (and I did feel here that the music lost its impetus), and in the last movement where the piano has a single strand of simple triplet quavers over a pedal bass (this occurs twice). Immediately after the first appearance of these triplets he races the return of the first tune to make up for lost time. You may not like some of his tricks, but after all he is a Russian playing Russian music, and playing it very well, and his interpretation is well worth serious attention.

But you may also wish to own this record for the sake of its superb quality. The piano tone is full and round, and the orchestra sounds unusually rich and lifelike. I would only quarrel with the passage in the first movement where the main tune returns on the orchestra and the piano has a short repeated phrase against it. Here, it seems to me, someone has turned up a microphone close to the piano, giving it clarity but also unreality; the orchestra always dominates the piano at this point in "live" performances. Fortunately no such disturbance occurs in the similar climax at the end of the last movement.

For good measure on the second side Malinin plays the big D flat nocturne of Chopin with rather more restraint than might be expected, judging by the concerto. R.F.

RAVEL. Daphnis et Chloé—Ballet. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch, New England Conservatory Chorus and Alumni Chorus directed by Robert Shaw in association with Lorna Cooke de Varon. H.M.V. ALP1374 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Geneva Choir, Suisse, Ansermet (5/53) LXT2775
Chorus, Ch.-Elysees, Inghelbrecht (11/55) DTL93048

It is customary to write of the choral parts of *Daphnis et Chloé* as being of nebulous importance, and indeed there is a great deal of truth in this. The idea of a chorus probably occurred to Ravel in the first place as a practical device for keeping the music going for a lengthy period during which he wished to have the orchestra lights extinguished; a stage black-out loses three-quarters of its effect if the pit is still shining like an amusement arcade. But, once necessarily there, Ravel used the chorus to add yet further colour to his orchestra from time to time; and how effective this colour can be is demonstrated most clearly on this new record. For the titling and direction of the choral element may look cumbersome, but the resulting sound is not so at all—it is clean, sure, and strong, adding considerably more than is usual to the effectiveness of Ravel's score. In one place, it is perhaps too clean: the chorus appears to sing its big moment, during the orchestral blackout, to "loo-loo-loo", adding definiteness of movement to a passage not convincingly meant to be very definite in the first place—the nature of wordless choral singing is surely to be remote and mysterious?

The choral excellence is, if anything, even surpassed by the orchestral excellence. Pan himself could quite certainly not have made his own flute solo more enchanting; and indeed everywhere the virtuoso Boston orchestra responds to the demands of Ravel's virtuosic score with the utmost skill and sensitivity.

In fact Munch directs in every respect a marvellous performance. And it is beautifully clearly recorded, allowing every orchestral detail to tell. Perhaps the clarity is not always an indisputable virtue; it might be possible to wish for a greater richness of general effect in the final pages of the music, and the *Pirates' Dance* has a rather restrained sound to it. This Dance suffers, too, from a most unfortunate choice of turnover point for the record; there must have been severe practical difficulties in the way of choosing what are obviously more suitable places either rather before or rather after the one actually used.

But in spite of this turnover difficulty, a recording of the complete ballet is very rewarding. Listeners familiar only with the two so-called "Suites" must not expect the whole work to disclose any extra music in itself superior to the excerpts they already know; but they will surely find that Ravel's original conception of a "choreographic symphony" was a real one—that

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the fresh contexts and perspective of the whole do enhance the effect of the already familiar symphonic fragments.

Not that the complete ballet is new to the gramophone repertory; but it is, I think, more convincingly done now than ever previously. Ansermet's was a fine performance, and the Decca recording of his climaxes is rich in effect; but the extra clarity of the new H.M.V. recording is substantial, and improves the effect of many of the quieter passages. Inghelbrecht alone chooses, or is enabled to choose, a good turnover point; but in other respects his performance is not quite the equal of Ansermet's or Munch's. Both these are very good indeed; but the playing of the Boston orchestra, the singing of their chorus, and H.M.V.'s American associates' recording do combine to indicate the new disc fairly clearly as first choice for a new purchaser. M.M.

RAVEL. Bolero. La Valse. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by **Eugene Ormandy**. Philips SBR6201 (10 in., 24s. od.).

Here are two very good performances, both well recorded, and I have no adverse criticism whatever of this disc if you want just these two works together and no others. It will be noticed that the record is issued at a bargain price and it is, in fact, one of a series which Philips are putting out to help those who cannot afford to put down more than a small sum at a time.

Personally I would say that the disc is useful for quite a different reason. It is not, in fact, so much of a bargain. *La Valse* is short for a whole 10-inch side (about 11 minutes). Apart from that, though many of us don't want to fork out a large sum of money at a time, we can always wait and save a bit: and when you look through the catalogue and see what else you can buy with either of these works on a 12-inch, you begin to doubt the bargain.

Where this disc is to be welcomed is that it does avoid those collections of short pieces, four or five of them on a disc, which so limit your freedom of choice and of which we have so often complained in these pages. That is why I would give it a special welcome, especially as it is so well done all round. T.H.

SAINT-SAENS. Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33. TCHAIKOVSKY. Variations on a Roco Theme, Op. 33.

FAURE. Elégie, Op. 24. Paul Tortelier ('cello), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Herbert Menges**. H.M.V. ALP1336 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Concerto No. 1:
Nelson, L.P.O. Boulton (4/54) LXT2906
Variations on a Roco Theme:
Gendron, Suisse, Ansermet (3/54) LXT2895

This is a most successful record. The Tchaikovsky makes of the 'cellist technical demands out of the ordinary, and persuades us readily of what we have lost in having no full-scale Tchaikovsky 'cello concerto (just as the Dvořák so often persuades us of what we have lost in having no full-scale Brahms 'cello concerto). Here Tchaikovsky's

demands are fulfilled quite wonderfully; Tortelier is master of every situation, spanning a compass of just on five octaves with apparent consummate ease. The orchestral playing, too, is both most beautiful in itself, and also most beautifully integrated with the solo.

The Saint-Saëns concerto is rather less of a showpiece; and indeed perhaps it was the composer's own technical skill that led him to soft-pedal on fireworks for the solo 'cello, for that instrument only seldom sounds at its best during their display. Instead Saint-Saëns concentrated on elegance, and on audibility; and both virtues contribute substantially to his successful piece. Again Tortelier, Menges, and the Philharmonia give a fine performance; but if it is in any way behind that of the Tchaikovsky it may be so in trying to give the concerto more of a virtuosic character than Saint-Saëns intended. Of skill there is nothing whatever lacking, but some of the leisurely poetry of the work is rather hurried over.

The Faure forms a most acceptable fill-up, and all three works are recorded extremely well; there is a great deal both of brilliance and of clarity, and the balance between solo and orchestra is most skilfully and successfully handled.

This all adds up to a highly desirable record, and as in the case of both concertos the alternative versions, too, are very good any distinctions to be drawn will necessarily only be fine ones. Maurice Gendron gives very nearly as outstanding a performance of the Tchaikovsky as Tortelier's, and he, too, is well recorded. On the reverse of his Decca record he gives a very good performance of the Schumann Concerto. Zara Nelsova's Decca of the Saint-Saëns concerto is marginally less well recorded than the new H.M.V., but I think she gives a rather more poetic performance of the work than Tortelier. On the reverse of her disc she gives the Lalo Concerto. None of the three records concerned, however, is really likely to occasion a buyer any disappointment whatever. M.M.

SAINT-SAENS. Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78. George Crook (organ), **Joseph Kahn** (piano), **N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Arturo Toscanini**. H.M.V. ALP1296 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). Recording of broadcast performance, November 15th, 1952.

New York S.O., Munch (1/54) 88CX1116
Hague P.O., Otterloo (7/55) NBR0021
Durufle, C.-E. Orch., Bour (4/56) DTL93072

Whatever the faults of this record, it's the one for me. And there are faults, in performance as well as recording. The opening string *pp* is disturbed by a slight variation of sound and there is a faint voice to be heard: for all that, here is a real *pp*. There was evidently a studio audience for this broadcast but its coughs are mercifully discreet. The timpanist anticipates one climax with a full-sized roll a whole bar too soon (how he must have cursed himself!) but I find I don't mind much about any of that either. For here is quite evidently a

great conductor at work. I thought Munch and Otterloo did very well in their records of this symphony—and indeed they do—but comparison shows them to be good conductors faced now by a very great one. (Bour, in my opinion, does not enter the discussion).

I must honestly say that the recording has the almost expected defect of shrill violins when they play high and loudly: but the general standard of sound is better than in some other similar recordings. All the rival versions of this symphony sound better. I still don't mind.

But who would have expected Toscanini to come out with Saint-Saëns third? He does it, moreover, as though it has been his favourite work all his life. How entrancingly the more melodic bits of the first movement are played: and, as you would expect, what verve the rest has, especially with this virtuoso orchestra. The *presto* section of the Scherzo might have gained from control that was a bit less excited and one feels this even more in the Finale, where the composer's repeated *sans presser* seems to have been forgotten in the general excitement.

The pianist adds a neat contribution, though his part merits star billing no more than any other member of the orchestra (and anyway there are two of them in the Finale). The organist is different, for a great deal depends on his judgment. Here he begins well but is far too loud in the slow movement, especially at the very end.

What a pity the last movement of this work isn't up to the rest, which is really so very good. As for the slow movement melody I have loved it secretly for years, but shall come out into the open now that I find that Toscanini quite evidently loves it equally!

For all my enthusiasm I have tried to indicate this record's drawbacks, and I must in fairness say clearly that Otterloo's performance is a good one, it is far better recorded, and it is by a long way the cheapest of the lot—a very good Philips bargain. Yet... T.H.

SHOSTAKOVITCH. Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93. Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Karel Ancerl**. D.G.G. DGM18300 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

N.Y. P.O. Mitropoulos (7/55) ABL3062
Philharmonia, Kurtz (2/56) (H)ALP1822

This record is distinguished primarily by the most superlative orchestral playing. There is a neatness and point to the string and wind playing alike that is only seldom heard, even on record; though tonally there is not quite such outstanding excellence, anyway to British ears. There has always been a tendency in Czech orchestras to prefer a smoother, fuller brass tone, and to some less extent a woodwind tone, than we do; this helps to unify the sound of a tutti, but also it diminishes the range of colour available orchestrally. The unifying process is now extended by the adoption of a vibrato by all the wind; a vibrato used on this record with discretion by the woodwind and horns, who modify its width according to the context of the music, but with rather less discretion by the trumpets. Thus some

brilliance of tone is certainly lost, some beauty perhaps gained—and in any event the individual playing is so skilled that many solo moments stand out forcibly in the memory. The duet for two piccolos at the end of the first movement was surely meant to sound exactly like this; and I cannot recall ever hearing a soft gong stroke of such electrifying effect—though in this case the player would no doubt wish to share his bow with the maker of the instrument (a wizened silver-beater from the bazaars of Smyrna, or Isfahan, or Peking, one would like to think; but more probably a factory-worker in Birmingham or Prague).

The orchestral excellences are moulded by Karel Ancerl into a fine reading of the symphony, though one which seems almost to apologise for the length of Shostakovich's first movement. For the adoption of a rather faster tempo than usual for this opening movement might seem on the face of it to ease matters if they should seem long-winded, but does not in the event certainly do so. By robbing the music of some small degree of its intensity the length seems less appropriate than normally, and we are in some danger of feeling that the matter is unequal to the scale of its presentation; a feeling that the third, rather than the first movement of the symphony may engender in any case. (It is a problem familiar from Mahler, one of Shostakovich's spiritual ancestors; it is not the half-hour adagio of heartfelt beauty that seems long, but the quarter-hour semi-scherzo of half-hearted amiability.) Some fractional lack of driving effect in the second and fourth movements of the Shostakovich is, I think, attributable primarily to the woolliness of the brass tone. It is certainly not attributable to any shortcomings in the quality of the playing, which is throughout entirely miraculous.

D.G.G. have something of the Czech Philharmonic quality to their recording, here and elsewhere; it is beautifully toned, and it is beautifully clear—but if there is a defect it is in some slight lack of brilliance. Seeking this extra brilliance, I would turn to the H.M.V. of Eferm Kurtz and the Philharmonia, an outstanding record from every point of view. Without that competition, I would no doubt be writing also about this new D.G.G. record in exactly those terms; it most certainly deserves them. M.M.

SMETANA. Ma Vlast. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Rafael Kubelik.** Mercury MRL2504-5 (two 12 in., 79s. 3d.).

The collection of six tone poems, *My Fatherland*, by Smetana, is one of those things that people often say should be done more often: but really, are they all that good? And isn't the public perfectly right in choosing the ever-popular *Vltava* as the one it enjoys hearing? *Sarka* is perhaps neglected and might be brought into the concert repertory. But the others seem to me to have been written at a very variable level of inspiration. How well *Tabor* starts, for instance—most imaginatively—but how soon it gets dull: and much of the *allegro*

stuff in these pieces only just gets by because of its energy. If you don't agree, write and protest! But please be honest and do so only after you have listened again carefully right through the whole work.

And you can now do so, for Kubelik does his best and the orchestra plays well. (There is a complete Supraphon recording as well, by the way, but it is not at present available in this country). Unfortunately the recording is less satisfactory. It tends to shrillness, as American recordings so often seem to do, and it is not as clear as it should be. Balance, especially of the percussion, is extremely unreliable. Just after the start of *Tabor*, for instance, timpani should come in with a *mf* accent and a *diminuendo* through the *pp* of the rest of the orchestra—completely missing. Cymbals often sound as if they are fired from a gun: but at a moment of real climax (in *Bohemia's Woods and Fields*, for instance) they are not to be heard. As for the triangle, it might as well not be there and many passages greatly lack its touch of colour.

A pity, when conductor and orchestra seem to have taken so much trouble. Yet Kubelik presumably heard and passed these discs. Do things really sound so different on American apparatus? T.H.

STRAVINSKY. "The Firebird"—Suite from the Ballet. The Rite of Spring—Ballet. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by **Eugene Ormandy.** Philips NBL5032 (12 in., 33s. 11½d.).

The Firebird:
Suisse, Ansermet (6/51) LX3045 or (6/54) LXT2916
N.Y. S.O., Stravinsky (5/53) 33C1010
Minneapolis S.O., Dorati (2/55) MG50004
Suisse, Ansermet (Cpte. Ballet) (1/56) LXT5115
The Rite of Spring:
Suisse, Ansermet (4/51) LXT2563
Philharmonia, Markevitch (1/53) (H)CLP1003
N.Y. S.O., Stravinsky (12/53) 33CX1083
Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (10/54) CTL7061
Minneapolis S.O., Dorati (3/55) MRL2906
Berlin R.I.A.S., Fricisay (4/56) DGM18189

On the face of it, this record is a bargain; for the first time it gets the whole of *The Rite of Spring* on to one side—all other versions occupy two full sides. But alas, I am not much taken with its sound and I think the performance deplorable.

The recording is all right when the music is quiet but the moment the orchestra at large gets going the sound lacks essential clarity and at times it is really difficult to hear what is going on. Even when I strain my ears to sort things out I frequently find most important things missing or scarcely to be heard and it seems that, general sound apart, even the balance is not good. One wonders if whoever supervised this recording was competent to deal with so complex a score.

As to the performance itself, Ormandy gives the music little of its powerful primitive rhythm and the result is a most characterless business. If this slick rushing through of the score (with no clear break between its two parts) is caused by the decision to get the work on to one side, then one can only deplore it.

But I doubt if it is, for the *Firebird Suite*, usually a one-sider, suffers in the same way. *The Variation of the Pigeon of feu* is one instance. The speed is a great deal faster than the

composer indicates, faster also than the composer takes in his own recording, and the result is that the character of the rhythmic string part of the score is completely gone. *Kastchei's Dance* is poor rhythmically. And what is that tubular bell (apparently) doing, added to the violent chords that punctuate the opening of this dance? Worse, though the chords are marked with the shortest staccato, the bell is allowed to sound on.

To return to the recording, in the Finale the third chord after Figure 14 of the score suffers a very nasty change in sound from the rest. I can only hope that my copy was an unlucky one.

I am afraid this record cannot be at all recommended. Of other versions of *The Rite*, Ansermet's is authentic and still sounds very well. Stravinsky's own won't do if you must have the best quality sound but it has something in its interpretation that none of the others has. Fricisay does it extremely well and, as Peter Heyworth remarked in his recent Record Retrospect, the sound is stunning: whether it is quite the right sort of sound for this work is something I questioned in my review (April, 1956), but it will probably be your choice.

As to the *Firebird*, my advice is to blue a bit more money and buy Ansermet's performance of the complete ballet, not just the Suite, for it is well worth it in every possible way. T.H.

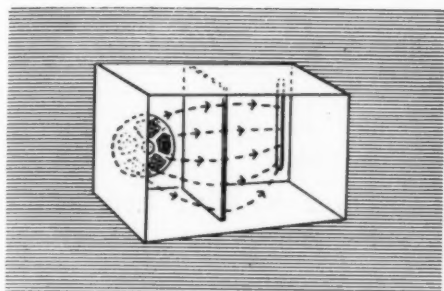
TCHAIKOVSKY. Capriccio Italien, Op. 45. 1812 Overture. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Antal Dorati.** Mercury MRL2514 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Capriccio Italien:
Belgian R. O., Andre (2/53) LGM65005
Paris Conservatoire, Schuricht (2/53) LXT2761
C.B.S. S.O., Beecham (4/53) 33CX1037
Philharmonia, Galliera (3/54) 33SX1013
Concertgebouw, Kempen (6/54) ABR4003
L.S.O., Scherchen (10/54) NLP914
Vienna P.M., Perlea (6/55) PL8700
L.S.O., Collins (6/56) LXT5186
1812 Overture:
L.P.O., Boulton (8/52) LXT2606
L.S.O., Scherchen (7/54) NLP909
Concertgebouw, Kempen (8/54) ABR4003
Philharmonia, Malko (4/55) (H)DLP1069
Vienna P.M., Perlea (6/55) PL8700

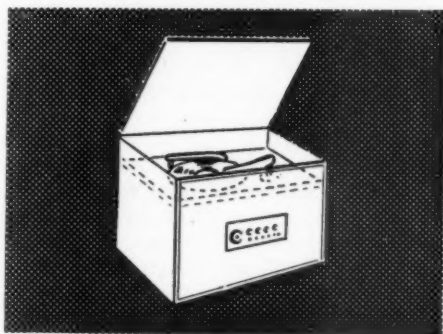
I swore gently; it was an unlabelled pressing, with three bands for supposedly two pieces. The third band will be something unrecognisable by Kabalevsky or Miaskovsky, I thought; one of those unidentified secrets they sometimes put in to see if we really do listen to the records or not. So I tried the bands, experimentally: No. 1, the *Capriccio* all right; No. 2, *1812*; No. 3, and I promptly threw myself flat on my face. Reassurance came quickly, however, with the voice of one of our undoubted allies: "The sounds you have just heard", it said, "are those of a muzzle-loading bronze cannon manufactured in Strasbourg (France) in 1761". In London (England) we don't often bargain for such shocks in 1956, I reflected as I picked myself up, suffering only from minor injuries; but meanwhile the voice was launched into an entertaining description of the recording of the muzzle-loading monster at West Point, the recording of the bells at Yale University, and the dubbing of both into the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra's performance of Tchaikovsky's *1812*.



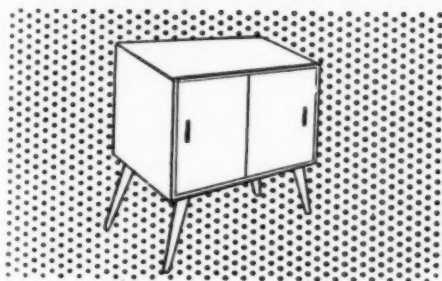
WE THOUGHT IT JUST WASN'T POSSIBLE!



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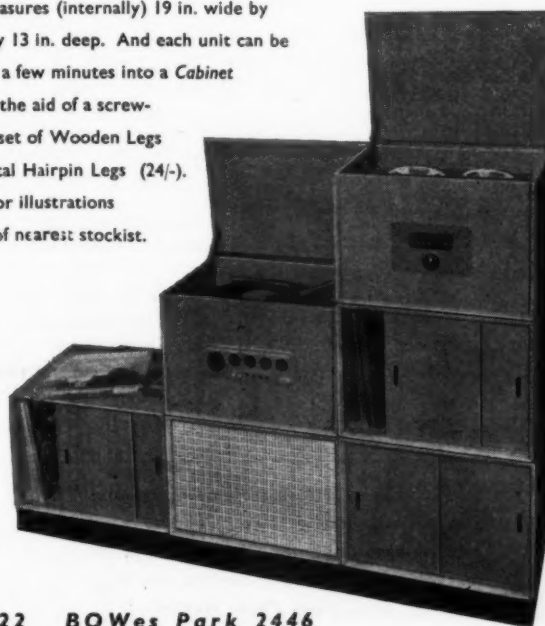
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So I played through 1812; and certainly bells and cannon do make a gloriously effective finale. The dubbing is highly successful—the cannon fires, or appears to fire, its part as accurately as a bass-drummer normally plays it; a drum, however, usually produces only comparatively tepid results. Indeed, the percussion and "effects" are here extremely effective throughout, partly because they are very well done, and partly because they are given high prominence in the recording balance. The quality of the recording is brilliant enough, too, for this to come off; in fact, the disc might even reach the demonstration record class, were it not for a hardness of the string tone. This hardness to some extent exists in the performance, too, but 1812 is only a small sufferer from it; it is in the *Capriccio Italien* that room might have been found for more humanity. Even so, Dorati brings to both pieces a fire and impetus that are wholly welcome.

Consideration of alternative versions of 1812 resolves itself largely into a consideration of alternative gimmicks to bells and cannon. Fricsay has the most stunning up his sleeve: his D.G.G. opens with a male voice chorus beside which Tchaikovsky's solo violas and 'cellos sound like a poor arrangement. Fricsay goes on to give a very good and superbly recorded performance, too; but reintroduces his chorus only half-heartedly at the end—Tchaikovsky, I think, would have given them an altogether more ambitious choral part, if he had expected them to be there at all. Scherchen is ambitious in the finale; he exploits, in addition to the L.S.O., the musical (not, unfortunately, the ballistic) resources of the Irish Guards. And Malko and the Philharmonia just give a rattling good performance, lacking only some extra resource to enliven the finale. Backings are Fricsay, the *Flying Dutchman* overture; Scherchen, *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Marche Slave*; and Malko the *Oberon* and *Zampa* overtures.

The *Capriccio Italien* has many excellent alternatives, too; here choice cannot reasonably be dissociated from backings. These are for Scherchen, the *Capriccio Espagnol*; for Collins, *Francesca da Rimini*; and for Galliera and the Philharmonia, still my own first choice as far as the *Capriccio Italien* is concerned, Liszt's *Les Préludes*. But the new record, too, is I think capable of giving much satisfaction even after the novelty of the incidental effects has worn off.

M.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY. "The Sleeping Princess", Op. 66—Ballet. Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by Robert Irving. H.M.V. CLP1073-4 (two 12 in., 67s. 11d.).

Par. Cons., Fistoulari

(2/53) LXT2702-3

A first-rate performance of this marvellous ballet score. Irving and the Covent Garden Orchestra must have played it pretty often but they have come fresh to this recording and the playing is in general excellent. No doubt ballet fans will want every bar on all four sides: and the rest of us can hardly fail to enjoy perhaps shorter sessions, for in

this score there seems to be no end to Tchaikovsky's delightful invention.

I hope nobody will expect a detailed comparison with Fistoulari's earlier complete version. That is enjoyable too. But the matter is settled by the superior quality of the recording in the new issue. It is what Ethel Monticue, in one of my favourite novels, would have called "sumptuous", and that is just what one wants for a score of this sort.

Altogether, irresistible music most excellently played and recorded. T.H.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. *Symphony No. 8 in D minor. Hallé Orchestra* conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. Pye-Nixa NGT17000 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

The series of Vaughan Williams's symphonies creeps inexorably onward. The Eighth was given its first performance by Sir John Barbirolli, to whom it is dedicated, and the Hallé at Manchester last May; and Pye-Nixa took this opportunity of being first in the field with a recording. To emphasise the historical nature of the occasion Pye-Nixa have decorated their sleeve most agreeably with signatures of the orchestral players concerned, taken from the autographed title-page of the original manuscript score; and they have reproduced, too, Vaughan Williams's own programme note on the work, complete with a plenitude of music-type examples. This note discloses no less than does the music itself the agile cast of the composer's ever-young mind: soothing listeners wedded to classical sonata-form, seeking a precedent in Brahms for other mildly unusual formal procedures, and—most characteristic of all—clearly enjoying himself immensely playing with some new toys in the percussion department—"all the 'phones and 'spiels known to the composer".

These 'phones and 'spiels do to some limited extent circumscribe the work itself, for to enjoy the first movement, a *Fantasia* subtitled *Variazioni senza tema*, it is necessary to accept the vibraphone as a normal symphonic sound. This should be easy enough for a generation that has learned to laugh at Gounod's objections to César Franck's symphonic use of the cor anglais. But it might be found less easy, I think, to discover the cast of the music of the finale, a *Toccata*; for this is almost wholly overlaid, to the ear, with the combined efforts of the exotic percussion section, exploited collectively rather than individually. And even between the outside movements Vaughan Williams's mind is as exploratory as ever, scoring the *Scherzo* (not a particularly vivacious one) for wind alone, and the *Cavatina* (a remarkably beautiful one) for strings alone.

In total, though, it is difficult to see this Eighth Symphony as the crown of Vaughan Williams's symphonic output; and in any event we may sincerely hope that it is not even intended to be any such thing—there have been comparatively unexciting Eighth Symphonies before. What is quite certain is that on this record it is presented in a wholly favourable light by a most effective performance on the part of the Hallé;

whether it is beautiful string-playing, incisive wind-playing, or glamorous vibraphone-playing that is required at the moment it is always there to hand. And the Pye-Nixa recording is first-class, too; extremely clean, the only possible difficulty it might offer in reproduction would be the string tone—for richness in this department it is necessary to boost the middle in reproduction rather more than usual. No boosting is necessary to hear the one fault: the 'cellos' announcement of the *Cavatina* is accompanied by a series of groans for all the world as though they were being led by Casals for the occasion. Not all of us enjoy this phenomenon when it emanates from Prades; and I am sure it was not one of the exotic tone-colours Vaughan Williams intended to extract from Manchester.

But the major virtues are all here, and in plenty; this is a very fine, a very welcome, and a very timely issue. M.M.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BACH. *Double Concerto in D minor.* Elisabeth Gilels (violin), Leonid Kogan (violin), Philharmonia String Orchestra. *Sarabande in B minor* from Sonata No. 2. Leonid Kogan (violin). *Concerto in E major.* Leonid Kogan (violin), Philharmonia String Orchestra conducted by Otto Ackermann. Columbia 33CX1373 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Double Concerto in D minor:

Menuhin, de Vito, Philharmonia, Bernard (11/54) (H)BLP1046
Barchet, Beh, Vienna Pro Musica, Davison (3/56) PL9150

Concerto in E major:

Goldberg, Philharmonia, Susskind (11/53) PMA1007
Heifetz, Los A. P.O., Wallenstein (6/55) (H)BLP1070
Barchet, Vienna Pro Musica, Davison (3/56) PL9150
Varga, Berlin P.O., Lehmann (5/56) APM14050
Grumiaux, Guller Chbr. (6/56) NBR6032

The two violinists in the Bach Double Concerto seem to me to have unusually beautiful tone and I much enjoyed their playing. No doubt part of this bouquet should be shared with the recording engineers who have done a good job, except for falling into the usual temptation of slightly over-emphasising the soloists. In the passage in the finale where they have double-stopped chords, the shreds of tune tossed about by the string band are inaudible. But the main fault with this disc is the absence of harpsichord continuo. If, as seems likely, the Philharmonia String Orchestra records in London, surely a harpsichord could have been rustled up somehow. In both the main works on this record there are passages that sound stupidly empty without one.

In the first episode of the E major concerto rondo finale (scored by Bach for solo violin and continuo only) discreet string chords have been added—indeed they are printed in at least one of the standard editions, and I was fascinated to notice that in the Grumiaux recording, which has got a harpsichord, these spurious string chords were still being played. And I hope I am not being too pedantic in suggesting that it is about time violinists started to insert a

short cadenza at bar 22 of the slow movement of the E major. I have never heard anyone do this yet, but Bach clearly expected it and the music seems to me senseless without. Leonid Kogan plays this movement most beautifully and altogether gives an excellent account of the whole concerto. I find the Grumiaux disc too resonant, Heifetz too brilliant, while Varga, apparently attempting eighteenth century bowing, manages to make the music sound a little dull. In the Double Concerto Gilels and Kogan are too fast in the slow movement, robbing this wonderful music of its celestial quality, but elsewhere play beautifully. What we want now is playing of this quality with a better balance and a harpsichord continuo. None of the recordings of this popular work is really worthy of it.

Leonid Kogan's playing of the unaccompanied B minor Sarabande makes me wish to hear a whole Bach sonata from him.
R.F.

BACH. Suite No. 2 in B minor. Suite No. 4 in D major. Karl Reznicek (flute), Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Felix Prohaska. Vanguard PVL7006 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Suite No. 2:
Munich P.A., Redel (6/56) DTL93073
Philharmonia, Klemperer (4/55) 33CX1239
Wummer, Prades Orch., Casals (1/54) 33CX1108
S.C.O., Munchinger (6/51) LX3043
Musikreis, Scheck (10/55) APM14033
Suite No. 4:
Munich P.A., Redel (6/56) DTL93074
Philharmonia, Klemperer (4/55) 33CX1240

Before even getting the record on to the turntable, I was pulled up short by a statement on the sleeve (I was pulled up, too, by another about the second *Bourrée* in the B minor Suite—"In a happy spirit, the upper melody is a burlesque working-out of a four-note ostinato in the bass;"—but finally let it go as an example of sleeve-note writer's guff). In Suite 4, we are told, the *Overture* is played according to the conventions of the period, with double dots, notes *inégaux* and everything: this experiment "has, to our knowledge, not been attempted in modern times". Oh weep, all ye Third Programme experts, ye D.G.G. scholars, ye musicians in England, Germany and America! This is all the impression your efforts have made.

But only this one movement is so treated: for the rest of the two Suites we are back to the old uncomprehending nineteenth-century style, and at the end of Suite 4 a conventional reading of the *Overture* is added. This makes interesting comparison; but viewed as a whole, the philosophy behind this disc is difficult to comprehend. In effect, Prohaska is saying, "We know this is the way Bach should be played, but it's far too much trouble to alter all the parts, and anyhow many people couldn't care less about scholarship, so we'll just go on playing it exactly as printed, knowing that to be wrong". This strikes me as immoral. *Consciously* to muddle the dotted rhythms in the various voices (the fuss in bar 202 of Suite 2, to take one example only from many), start trills on the wrong note, or leave the canon in the B minor *Sarabande* unmatched, is merely perverse. It's bad

enough when we get this kind of thing through ignorance.

This apart, the B minor Suite is unimpressive. The flautist is none too rhythmic in the first *Allegro*, and adopts an unconvincing slower tempo for the second *Bourrée*; and the *Badinerie* is an untidy scramble, with the basses dropping a bad domino in bar 7. The recording, however, is nice and clear. We look equally vainly for any distinction in the performance of the fourth Suite.

And what about the much-vaunted proper presentation of the D major *Overture*? The players practically dislocate themselves getting in these convulsive upbeats, Prohaska doesn't hold the tempo steady, the balance between trumpets, oboes and strings has not been satisfactorily managed, and the oboe playing ranks among the poorest I have heard. Even so, the imaginative may perceive what inherent vitality there is in a French overture read with understanding.
L.S.

BARTOK STRING QUARTETS, Vol. 3. Quartet No. 5. Quartet No. 6. Vegh String Quartet. Columbia 33CX1285 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Coupled as above:
Juilliard Qt. (7/56) ABL3093

Now that both series of Bartók Quartets are complete, I hope, in the near future, to undertake a comparative review in more leisurely conditions than the monthly rush of new issues makes possible. The Fifth and Sixth Quartets are by far the most approachable of the series; but it is very hard to choose between the Juilliard and Vegh versions. The same sort of considerations apply here as in the earlier recordings.

The Veghs are more brilliantly recorded, and play in a more forward sort of way, so that such passages as the hammered repeated notes of the first subject in No. 5 are more exciting in their set. On the other hand, the performance of Juilliards is perhaps more *finely* conceived; they phrase the *mezzo* theme which opens each movement of No. 6 and is delivered in a more eloquent way; and in the contrapuntal web of the finale they give to each of the four parts a more individual character. The Veghs score in the Burletta of this Quartet, which they play more sardonically than their rivals. The Juilliards are perhaps more atmospheric in their treatment of the "night music" which marks the second and fourth movements of No. 5—though here the superior recording of the Columbia disc tends to right the balance.
A.P.

ARRIEU. Quintet in C major.

DAMASE. Seventeen Variations.

IBERT. Three short pieces: Allegro; Andante; Assez lente—Allegro scherzando.

TOMASI. Variations on a Corsican theme. French Wind Quintet. London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50122 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

A most agreeable selection of near-contemporary French music for wind quintet: flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon. Most of it, too, exploits the medium most effectively: Ibert with his

characteristically gay *Three Pieces*, Jean-Michel Damase with his most enterprising *Variations*, and Claude Arrieu with her five-movement Quintet, in some ways the most sophisticated and elegant music on the disc. In comparison Henri Tomasi's *Variations on a Corsican theme* seem conventional; there may be a Corsican flavour to the theme, or even to the variations in general, but if so it is not at all an obvious one.

The playing of the French Wind Quintet is uniformly good, and uniformly well recorded. It is also better balanced than has always been the case; for Gilbert Coursier's vibrato adds warmth to his already heavy horn tone, and in past recordings this has sometimes given his part an undue prominence—on this record, however, all is well. A trifle more of the clarinet might possibly have been an advantage; but it may be that the French preference for thin clarinet tone—Jacques Lancelot typifies it at its best—stems partly from a wish to keep the instrument reticent. For the flute, oboe, and bassoon playing of Jean-Pierre Rampal, Pierre Pierlot, and Paul Hongne respectively I have nothing but praise; this is indeed a record of *Contemporary French Wind Music*, as it is called, at its best.
M.M.

BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47, "Kreutzer". David Oistrakh (violin), Lev Oborine (piano). Columbia 33C1047 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

Rostal, Osborn (11/52) LXT2732
Heifetz, Moiseiwitsch (12/53) (H)ALP1093
Fuchs, Balsam (4/54) AXTL1045
Francescatti, Casadesu (9/54) ABR4007
Elman, Seiger (3/56) LXT5126
de Vito, Aprea (2/56) (H)ALP1319
Schneiderhan, Kempff (3/56) DGM18092

Oistrakh and Oborine play the *Kreutzer* with determination, to which the first movement in particular responds very well. Indeed the reading as a whole is pleasing, but is not shown at all in a good light by the recording. This is thinnish, with an unconvincing piano tone that tends occasionally to a wavering of pitch (particularly at the opening of the second side—the *minore* variation).

In such a strongly competitive field this quality of recording makes it impossible to recommend the new disc; but it is not possible to be equally decisive about the relative merits of the older ones. In the ten-inch field Philips have recorded the beautiful performance of Francescatti and Casadesu quite satisfactorily; but perhaps even marginally better, both as to performance and recording, is the twelve-inch D.G.G. of Schneiderhan and Kempff. Both these versions turn in the middle of the slow movement, a proceeding less disastrous here, between variations, than it is in any other type of sonata movement. Listeners adamant, however, in refusing to countenance such a mid-movement break are catered for on the H.M.V. of de Vito and Aprea; a good recording of a satisfactory performance. They might also just possibly consider Elman and Seiger's Decca—this turns between movements, is excellently recorded, and includes also the Beethoven *Spring Sonata*; but the style of the performance is over-romantic. M.M.



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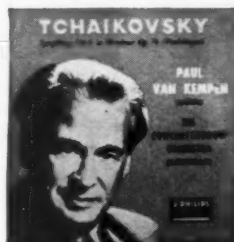
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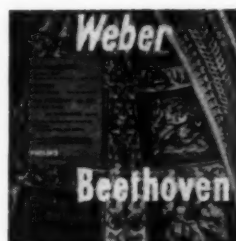
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BOCCHERINI. Concerto for Flute and Orchestra in D major.**GLUCK. Concerto for Flute and Orchestra in G major.**

PERGOLESI. Concerto for Flute and Orchestra in G major. Camillo Wanaussek (flute), Pro Musica Symphony, Vienna, conducted by Charles Adler and Michael Gielen. Vox PL9440 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Curiously, all three of these concertos are in the doubtful class, in the sense that they would be more exactly described as *attrib. Boccherini, attrib. Gluck, and attrib. Pergolesi*. It is also doubtful whether any of the composers would willingly acknowledge them without the compulsion of a paternity order; they are not particularly attractive offspring, whosoever they may be. Least dull is the Pergolesi, which certainly has its moments, and the Pergolesi, too, produces the nearest approach to a gay finale that there is on the disc.

No doubts about the music extend, however, to the performances—these are quite first-class, with Wanaussek a fluent and expressive soloist, and the Vienna orchestra sensitive and well-balanced accompanists. The faultlessly engineered recording, too, is rich and spacious in sound; in fact this is an entirely first-class version of the three flute concertos concerned. M.M.

BOCCHERINI. Quartet in A major, Op. 39, No. 8. La Tiranna, Op. 44, No. 4. Carmirelli Quartet. Trio in G minor, Op. 9, No. 5. Trio in G major, Op. 38, No. 2. Members of the Carmirelli Quartet. Decca LXT5200 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Best known to string players for his quintets, Boccherini's quartets and trios, no less agreeable, are now on offer. Most effective of all, perhaps, is the A major Quartet, with a brooding slow movement of some depth. The title *La Tiranna* (I wonder who she was?) identifies a two-movement "Quartettino" written for Frederick William of Prussia; but with considerably less obeisance paid to the 'cello-playing capabilities of that monarch than Mozart felt obliged to pay in similar circumstances. The two trios suffer only from a monotony of key: the first of them pays lip-service to the G minor of its description with its opening movement, and then, most curiously, both remaining movements and the whole of the next Trio are in G major. This tires the ear, and is not good record-planning (a remorseless identity of tonic in a series of successive movements was quite early abandoned by composers when music began to lengthen). The practical unit of domestic listening, I am quite convinced, is not now a disc (save, obviously, of a single work) or a band but a side; and, if the record-planner is not expected to be in a position to give as much thought to key-sequence as the composer of a twenty-five minute work is in the first place, he should at least ensure as far as possible that his record side can be listened to continuously without actual discomfort.

Often it is difficult, of course, to avoid a side of classical flute concertos being entirely in D major, or of classical horn concertos being entirely in E flat major, or of classical viola d'amore concertos being entirely in D minor; but this only points the fundamental undesirability in any event of concertos on one record side being numbered in the plural at all.

Before the digression gets out of hand let me return to Boccherini, who, in or out of G major, is most excellently handled on the present disc by the players of the Carmirelli Quartet. They receive, too, most excellent recording, marred only by a momentary distortion on the opening note of the A major quartet's slow movement. The Boccherini discography is expanding most rewardingly. M.M.

BRAHMS. Quartet No. 2 in A major for Piano and Strings, Op. 26. Clifford Curzon (piano), Members of the Budapest String Quartet. Philips ABL3122 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

Like its companion work in G minor, Op. 25, Brahms's A major piano quartet is a big work, playing for the best part of three-quarters of an hour even without the repeat in the first movement. It has always seemed to me to be much the finer work, the best that Brahms had written at that stage in his career, and it is a pity that the paucity of piano quartet combinations makes performances of it so rare. I do not know how much Curzon has played with the Budapest Quartet; their ensemble seemed to me pretty good. Curzon plays with his usual controlled fire. I am not quite happy about the over-sweet "Hungarian" quality of the first violin, but generally speaking the performance does full justice to this fine music. The recording too is good, the piano and strings unusually well balanced. I hope that soon we shall be given a recording of the less exuberant and more closely knit piano quartet in C minor. Meanwhile I would strongly recommend this disc of the A major. R.F.

CORELLI. Concerto No. 5 in B flat major; Concerto No. 8 in G minor, "Christmas Concerto" from Concerti Grossi, Op. 6. I Musici. Philips SBR6207 (10 in., 24s. od.).

Concerto No. 8 in G minor:
Virtuosi di Roma (1/54) AXTL1082
V.S.O., Pritchard (11/54) ABR4014

I Musici consist of eleven excellent string players and a harpsichordist, an ideal number for early eighteenth century Italian concerti, and these two examples by Corelli are most beautifully played. There might have been a little more contrast between the three soloists and the complete band; the addition of the remaining eight players to the soloists often makes surprisingly little difference to either volume or quality, and for this the balance is presumably responsible. But the playing is so pure and so stylish that one can easily overlook this defect. In marked contrast to this chamber music interpretation, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra sound like an unruly crowd, the effect of vast size exaggerated by the very resonant acoustic

on that disc. In any case the playing has little of the clean finish and sense of period manifest in the new version, and in the first allegro the harpsichord is constantly in front of the beat. I Musici's harpsichord might have been a little more prominent; it is in fact barely audible except in quiet passages. But perhaps most listeners prefer it that way. In any case I cannot imagine anyone with music in his soul listening to these golden sounds and not enjoying them; the quality is superb. R.F.

FRANCK. Sonata in A major. Yehudi Menuhin (violin), Louis Kentner (piano). H.M.V. BLP1082 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

Bobesco, Genty (9/51) LX3056
Francescatti, Casadesus (1/54) 38CX1111
D. Oistrakh, Jampolsky (3/55) 38CX1201

Columbia have twice recorded excellent versions of the Franck sonata on one side of a 12 in. disc, throwing in the Debussy sonata on the Francescatti record and the Szymanowski on the Oistrakh. H.M.V. presumably hope to catch the Menuhin enthusiasts and those who want the Franck on its own, for this new record is not really such an economical buy as the two predecessors just mentioned. It begins disappointingly with both players sounding rather distant, their tone rather muffled. To some extent Kentner's use of the soft pedal is probably responsible for this. In contrast Oistrakh's tone sounds almost too close, but its wonderful pellucid quality and the affection with which he plays this movement make this performance altogether more attractive than Menuhin's. But as the work proceeds Menuhin and Kentner seem to warm up; also the quality of the sound seems to improve—or is it just that one's ears grow used to this perspective? By the third movement things are going splendidly, and I much preferred the climax of both this and the last movement in the new version. Oistrakh's tone has an almost feminine sweetness at times, and Menuhin's more forthright approach suits the music better. Kentner, too, is excellent at the more vigorous moments. A most enjoyable disc. R.F.

HAYDN. Cossation in C major for Lute Obligato, Violin and Bass. Walter Gerwig (lute), Ilse Brix-Meinert (violin), Johannes Koch (viola da gamba). D.G.G. Archive EPA37090 (7 in., 16s. 8½d.).

A pleasant, if not particularly exciting, discovery, this Cossation relies for its interest mainly on its unusual scoring, though musically the most rewarding movement is the graceful *Adagio*, an aria for violin with a mere skeleton accompaniment. Haydn uses the lute freely as an independent third voice (though naturally sometimes in parallel with one of the two bowed instruments); and it is instructive to see how well it blends and holds its part. A cadenza in the last movement also gives the lute an opportunity to show its paces. Walter Gerwig does not always seem at ease in the fast passages, when he is apt to fall behind slightly; but for the rest this is an acceptable and agreeable performance. P.B.

HOLMBOE. String Quartet No. 3, Op. 48.**NIELSEN. String Quartet No. 4 in F major, Op. 44. Koppel Quartet.**
Decca LXT5092 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

These two Danish string quartets are quite strongly contrasted. The earlier of them, Nielsen's work of 1906, is affable and easy-going; harmonically not noticeably characteristic of its composer, but aesthetically very much so—the vein of mild humour is there, and also, it must be admitted, the vein of occasional paralysing platitude. Indeed, the original title of the quartet, *Piacevolezza*, was highly appropriate; this is certainly *piacevole* music, and its qualities have earned it the reputation of being the best of all the Nielsen quartets.

But turn the disc for the recent Third Quartet of Vagn Holmboe, and here is a contemporary idiom of a different hue, perhaps owing something to Bartók; strength, determination, and beauty are in view, though without excess of ferocity. As in other of his quartets, Holmboe uses a five-movement lay-out, sandwiching vigorous second and fourth movements, noticeably of the same family, between slower and severer first, third, and fifth; these too are closely related. (The label's description of the third as an *Andante quasi una giaccona* had me hunting unsuccessfully in the dictionary; then I played the movement, and realised that what the *Andante* really was supposed to be like was a chaconne.)

These two works are very capably expounded by the very well-balanced Koppel Quartet, but might have gained in places from a rather greater warmth of expression. The recording is uniformly excellent, and the disc usefully adds much to the gramophone's resources in this particular field. M.M.

MOZART. Quartet No. 14 in G major, K.387. Quartet No. 15 in D minor, K.421. Barchet Quartet. Vox PL9480 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Coupled as above:
Italian Quartet (12/53) 33CX1102
Budapest Quartet (1/55) ABL3018
Roth Quartet (6/56) MRL2005
Quartet No. 14:
Amadeus Quartet (10/52) (H) DLP1003
Haydn Quartet, Brussels (3/54) LGM65011
Quartet No. 15:
Amadeus Quartet (9/55) (H) ALP1249

The Barchet Quartet is the fourth combination to put on to one disc the first two of the six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn, and an excellent disc it is. The quality is smoothly beautiful, the balance beyond criticism, and only some rather dubious tempi prevent my recommending this record without reservation. The first movement of the G major is a joy to hear, even though Barchet sometimes digs into the upbeat of the main tune rather harder than he need. The players give full weight to the dynamic contrasts (scarcely audible in the Roth recording) and yet preserve the intimate mellifluous quality this music needs. But in the minuet the tempo is too slow, slower than in any of the rival recordings, and the music drags; it is, after all, marked *Allegro*, not, as is more usual in a minuet, *Allegretto*, and Mozart was clearly

trying to guard against a too leisurely interpretation. This movement is commonly taken too slowly in my opinion, but seldom so slowly as here. The slow movement however is lovely, and the last very spirited. (First repeats only in the outside movements.) The tempo of the first movement of the D minor is a bit of a problem. Mozart first wrote *Allegro moderato* and then crossed out *moderato*. Both words, however, appear in the published parts, of which Mozart himself corrected the proofs. It is impossible to tell whether he crossed out the second word on the score before or after the parts were published. The Italian (94 crotchets to the minute), the Budapest and Roth quartets take this music at an unmistakable *allegro*; the Amadeus are on the fence at 84 crotchets to the minute, while the Barchet at 75 are much the slowest and really more *moderato* than *allegro*. At the beginning the music seems to lack urgency at this tempo, but later on much of it regains the true sombre mood and I found the wonderful development section most moving. In the rest of this work the Barchets find tempi with which no one will quarrel, and only extreme purists will complain of there being repeats in the theme but not in the variations of the last movement. I would not put this performance of the D minor above that by the Amadeus, but anyone who wants the G major and the D minor on one disc (and what lovely quartets they are) will hardly do better than to buy the Barchet version. R.F.

MOZART. Quartet No. 17 in B flat major, K.458, "Hunt".**SCHUBERT. Quartet No. 2 in G major. Quartetto Italiano. Columbia 33CX1367 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

Quartet No. 17:
Kroll Quartet (4/52) ALX86
Griller Quartet (2/53) LXT2728
Amadeus Quartet (12/53) WLP5099
Loewenguth Quartet (2/56) DG16004

Mozart's "Hunt" Quartet has been unkindly treated in the past by the record companies, and I cannot report that it fares much better on this occasion. Alone of the six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn it has yet to receive a really satisfactory recording. The Quartetto Italiano appear to play it in B major, never a favourite key of Mozart's. The Loewenguth Quartet too are recorded slightly sharp; the Amadeus, though in the right key, sound as though they were in a rather draughty tunnel and on this occasion cannot be listened to with the usual pleasure. A.P. has spoken well of the Kroll version, but this I have not heard.

The Italian quartet play much of this music well enough, and I especially enjoyed the last two movements. They are not, I think, so capricious in their use of rubato as in some of their previous Mozart recordings, though there is still a hint of flaccidity on occasions. But they are not too well served by the engineers. In all loud passages there seems to be more than a trace of distortion; at the very start the quality cannot be called really agreeable. The Loewenguth people make a pleasanter noise altogether, but are too quick in the minuet, a movement that calls for some solidity, and they seem quite ignorant as to how

appoggiaturas should be played; for instance those in the last bar of the slow movement should come on the beat, not before it. In any case one quartet for just under thirty shillings is not economically attractive these days. The Quartetto Italiano throw in a work written by Schubert in his early 'teens, and though it is worth hearing once, if only for the sake of the finale (had he just been listening to Mozart's G minor piano concerto?) it is, truth to tell, an apprentice piece, scarcely worth recording. If an unfamiliar work of this period is wanted, why does the Quartetto Italiano not revive a quartet by their fellow countryman Cherubini? He wrote several examples of far greater interest and true worth than the Schubert G major. R.F.

MOZART. Sonata No. 10 in B flat major, K.378. Sonata No. 15 in B flat major, K.454. Jascha Heifetz (violin), Brooks Smith (piano). H.M.V. ALP1331 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Heifetz has wisely chosen two of the biggest of Mozart's violin sonatas in which to display his talents, wisely because he inevitably turns them into display pieces, treatment which most of them would not stand up to. As it is, his conception of an *Allegretto* as revealed in the finale of K.454 would have very much surprised the composer and his friends, to put it mildly. He makes the wonderful slow movement of this sonata very lyrical, but seems to me to miss points in the outer movements. His virtuoso attitude to this music comes in handy for the fiendishly difficult *allegro* episode at the end of K.378 (what can Mozart's amateur friends have made of this?) but leads him in my opinion to play the slow movement of this sonata a little too fast. But his wonderful flow of beautiful tone and his effortless technique will more than compensate, as far as most listeners are concerned, for his over-quick tempi. These qualities are the more apparent in that he has been allowed his usual virtuoso balance; when Mozart gives the violin accompanying figures, they sound like the tune.

Much as I love Mozart, I am not sure that I wish to hear the repeats in lesser works such as the violin sonatas. In his day violinists undoubtedly varied the repeats, introducing embellishments of their own devising the second time through. Few of us would stomach such treatment to-day, and there now seems much less reason for repeating than there was then. If the music has enough substance one welcomes repeats; if it hasn't, one doesn't. But with listeners' conception as to what constitutes a work of substance varying so widely, it is impossible to please everyone; the problem is virtually insoluble. R.F.

WOLF. Italian Serenade. String Quartet in D minor. The New Music Quartet. Philips ABL3109 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

Italian Serenade:
Hollywood Quartet (9/54) CTL7063

The New Music Quartet (new-music quartet—in which case why Wolf?—or new music-quartet, which sounds bizarre?),

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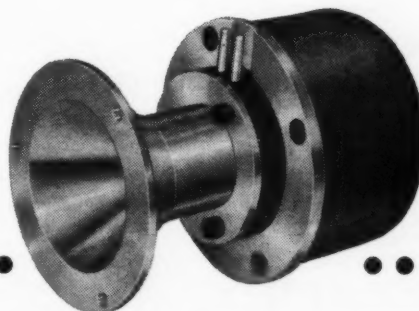
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which I have not previously come across, is patently an extremely alert and talented team. With masterly technique it puts over an *Italian Serenade* which must be about the fastest ever (I hope): the rhythmic control however never slips, the intonation and balance are practically faultless, and the only criticism I can make are that the semi-quavers at the cadence points get swallowed up, and the whole *Serenade* leaves me completely breathless. The recording is fuller and less edgy than the Hollywood team received, but that performance didn't sound quite such a rush.

The main interest in this disc is likely to be in the D minor Quartet (sub-titled *Renunciation*), of which this is the first recording, I believe (some reader will correct me if I'm mistaken). It was a youthful work, begun at the age of 18 but not completed until five years later, when it was offered to the Rosé Quartet, who rejected it in the most insulting terms. Personal feelings may have entered into this (for Wolf as a critic had been freely castigating those about him and had left them smarting), but the sheer size of the work—the first two movements are each immense—and its almost unrelieved sombre intensity may well have seemed daunting at first sight. As it is, the Quartet is practically never heard, and should be a natural for the Shawe-Taylorian game of "Dittersdorf". Uneven and over-long though it is, it contains much of interest, a passionate slow movement of great beauty, and a fine Scherzo; and the New Music Quartet gives it a radiant performance. The extreme fortes, such as at the beginning, are rather strident, but otherwise the recording is very good. There is so little of Wolf's instrumental music (despite an extraordinary statement to the contrary on the record sleeve), and we hear it so seldom, that this disc is all the more welcome. L.S.

SCARLATTI, A. Concerto No. 6 in E major.

VALENTINI. Concerto No. 3 in C major. Renato Zanfini (solo oboe).

VIVALDI. Concerto in C minor, P.438 (ed. Maderna). Concerto in C major, P.134 (ed. Malipiero).

Giuseppe Anedda, Flavio Cornacchia (solo mandolins). Concerto in G major, P.132 (ed. Ephrikian).

Edmondo Malanotte, Franco Gulli (solo violins). Virtuosi di Roma (Collegium Musicum Italicum) conducted by Renato Fasano.

H.M.V. ALP1344 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Unscholarly though it may be to say so, I would infinitely prefer to have this kind of disc, with a few miscellaneous works each chosen for their interest, than the heavy phalanxes of concertos (or whatever) slammed together for no other reason than that they appear in the same volume of that particular composer's collected works. Vivaldi is a master who—like most other masters—also produced things of little interest; and I applaud the Virtuosi di Roma's level-headedness in selecting only works they find worthy of attention. The C minor, for example, is a solid little concerto grosso, with an exuberant repeated-note finale played here with this ensemble's

usual gusto; the mandoline concerto is a curiosity of some musical value, extremely well played by whichever of the two soloists it is (what does the other one do?); and the two-violin work has zest and virtuosity (there is a most interesting written-out quasi-cadenza in the finale). It would have been preferable if all soloists had started their trills on the right note, and the harpsichordist had filled in the yawning gaps in the harmony which Malipiero left in his edition of the mandoline concerto and Ephrikian in the slow movement of the G major; but apart from this the performances are enjoyable enough.

There is equally vital playing on the other side. Zanfini shows himself a skilful and sympathetic oboist, and the Valentini work itself has many points of interest, including a slow movement scored for the solo oboe and one violin only nearly throughout. (I cannot, incidentally, bring myself to believe the ungrammatical and shocking final cadence of the first movement). The Scarlatti concerto, which I had not previously met, is the lively expression of an obvious personality, and, apart from its unusual string layout, is worlds removed from the conventional pattern-making which sometimes did duty for hard-pressed composers of eighteenth century concertos.

L.S.

VIVALDI. The Four Seasons (Spring, P.241; Summer, P.336; Autumn, P.257; Winter, P.442).

Manoug Parikian (violin), Thurston Dart (harpsichord), Philharmonia String Orchestra conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. Columbia 33CX1365 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Felix Ayo (violin), I Musici. Philips ABL3128 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

Tino Bacchetta (violin), Ensemble Instrumental Sinfonia conducted by Jean Witold. London International TWV91157 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Barchet, S.C.O., Munchinger (10/51) LXT2800
Virtuosi di Roma (5/55) (H)ALP1234
Soloists, Stuttgart P.M., Reinhardt

Corigliano, N.Y. S.O., Cantelli (8/56) DL173-1/2
AB13063

Two complete recordings already, four more in this last couple of months, another due any moment, and others scheduled (I understand)—where are the vast crowds that are demanding all these versions of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, a work which makes but infrequent appearances in the concert hall? For I presume the demand must be there for all the companies to plunge in like this: in which case I rejoice that the general public should be so percipient of the worth of these unusually interesting pieces of early programme music. Vividly illustrative they are, too, with storms, langourous heat, slippery ice, hunting scenes and all kinds of odd details such as a dog barking; yet, though (as always with descriptive music) a knowledge of the plot helps, the intrinsic musical thought is more than sufficient to hold the attention—which is more than can be said for all eighteenth-century concerti grossi.

Of all the recordings now on the market, the new Philips seems to me quite the best (it is also, strangely enough, the cheapest). The style is both authentic and lively, the

recording extremely clear and well balanced, and the soloist, Felix Ayo, a player of quite exceptional quality. The Columbia is less well recorded—there is too much resonance for comfort—and the whole interpretation tends towards the romantic, with expressive dynamics which are certainly musical but which do not strictly belong to the period.

As to the London, there is little of the baroque feeling there; and some extremely hit-or-miss ensemble work must, since the dangerous moments often occur at changes of tempo, be attributed to the conductor (e.g. the D minor episode 46 bars before the end of the first movement of *Autumn*). The soloist is more notable for his vigour than for anything else, and the engineers do not give us particularly agreeable string tone; but since the studio appears to be far from soundproof, they do give us the hum of the traffic outside and the sound of some interesting gear-changes. The 'cello continuo plays beefily throughout, drowning the harpsichordist, who does not contribute much of interest, and who in parts of the first movement of *Winter*, when he is sorely needed, is inexplicably silent altogether.

Each of the other sets has as harpsichordist an artist who understands the true tradition of continuo playing; but except in *Winter*, in which Mr. Dart introduces some excellent ideas, I find his unnamed rival generally shows better taste and, it must be said, less fussiness. A word of praise for Philips's attractive cover of the four seasons as seen by—who is it Brueghel? L.S.

INSTRUMENTAL

BACH. Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

Prelude and Fugue in E minor.

Prelude and Fugue in A minor.

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor.

Prelude and Fugue in G major.

Albert Schweitzer (organ). Philips

ABL3134 (12 in., 38s. 3d.). Recorded at the Parish Church, Gunsbach, Alsace.

Those who know their Schweitzer will expect much of this music* to be played rather slowly and they will readily forgive him the occasional fluffs, marvelling that a man of his age with few opportunities to practise should make so few. The only piece that seemed to me really to suffer from the slow tempi was the G major prelude, which, unless it is played brilliantly, is not very interesting. The Passacaglia was perhaps dragging a little by the eighth variation, but the other big works sound magnificent. The great A minor Prelude and Fugue and the famous D minor Toccata and Fugue are played with humility and sincerity and matured comprehension; they come from the loudspeaker as great music played by a man who believes in them passionately and has no wish to obtrude his own personality. Philips are to be congratulated on the sleeve, which contains lavish and interesting programme notes by Schweitzer himself, complete with copious music examples. Would any other writer have been allowed the luxury of quoting music from a cantata and a prelude only dubiously connected with any work on this disc, or the prolixity

of quoting the G major themes twice over? I was interested to find that Schweitzer is quite confident that the Toccata is "pre-Weimar", in other words that Bach wrote it before he was twenty-three. Most Bach scholars would put it later than that, in fact in the Weimar period. The sleeve should, I think, have mentioned that the organ at Gunsbach, Alsace, on which this music was recorded, was designed to Schweitzer's own specifications. It sounds a fine instrument, though rather stridently recorded. Regrettably it is a shade out of tune all through the disc, most noticeably so in the E minor prelude for some reason. Bach's part-writing is not as clear on this organ as on those used on the Walcha discs reviewed elsewhere in these columns, but the instrument is nevertheless a splendid medium for conveying Schweitzer's broad and noble conception of this great music.

R.F.

BACH. 18 Choräle von Verschiedener Art, BWV651-668. Helmut Walcha (at the Schnitger-Organ, Cappel). **Six Choräle von Verschiedener Art, BWV645-650. Helmut Walcha** (at the Small Organ, St. Jakobi, Lübeck). D.G.G. Archive APM14039-41 (three 12 in., 118s. 10½d.).

Bach probably wrote the "Eighteen" choral preludes at the very end of his life. They have no especial grandeur and they are not "pretty". These spiritual musings of a very great composer in old age are filled with Christian wisdom and rounded with consummate craftsmanship. They make wonderful late-night listening. Within the limits Bach prescribes for himself there is plenty of contrast. Walcha plays these great pieces on the type of organ to which Bach was accustomed and they emerge crystal clear in detail and radiant in tone quality. Though one can criticise him in detail, in general one would hardly hope to hear better discs of these preludes. Perhaps he does not quite feel the pathos of *Schmücke dich*, or display enough virtuosity at the end of *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig*. Perhaps the registration of the trio version of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* is a little too eccentric even for baroque enthusiasts, and there was altogether too much 2 ft. tone in the trio *Herr Jesu Christ*, which at times sounded as though a lot of piccolos were playing, almost like a fife band. I would be interested to know why Walcha plays the pedal part of *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen* on an 8 ft. stop instead of on a 4 ft. as marked in the Novello edition. Or is the Novello edition wrong? Inevitably the Schnitger organ at Cappel sounds a little wheezy at times, notably the pedals at the start of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* (side 5), but what a splendid noise the full organ makes (third version of *Nun komm*, side 3) and the quiet stops are ravishingly beautiful, for instance, in *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* (side 1). This latter is almost my favourite, but I was also entranced by the chromaticisms in the middle of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* (side 5) and in particular by the quiet, thoughtful *Wenn wir in höchsten Nothen sein* at the very end of the set (side 5). As with so much of Bach's last music, this lovely

contemplative piece turns out to be a fantastic amalgam of contrapuntal ingenuities, which make it neither more nor less beautiful, but they can nevertheless be admired for their own sake. Walcha's playing of these choral preludes is very steady, and his trills, notably in *Komm, heiliger Geist*, are a musicologist's joy. Walcha is one of those very rare creatures, a man with both the knowledge and the ability to play eighteenth century music. They seldom go together.

On side 6 are the six "Schubler" preludes, for the most part short, slight pieces full of charm. The first, however, is rather more than that; *Wachet auf*, partly because it was for long championed by Walford Davies, is the best known of all Bach's choral preludes in this country, and it may well be that we all have a quite wrong conception as to how it should sound. I must confess to finding Walcha's brisk tempo intolerable, though possibly I might get used to it in time. The others make a welcome contrast to the more solid fare on the other five sides and are beautifully played.

I wish D.G.G. would make a more imaginative use of their sleeves. On this set we are given three times over their familiar list of "The main research periods of Western Music", a list of much more interest, I should have thought, to D.G.G. than to anyone outside the company. One's pleasure in the "Eighteen" choral preludes could have been much increased by the printing on the sleeves of the twelve chorales on which they are based, or at least their first lines. Bach decorates these old tunes so lavishly that sometimes it is very hard to recognise their appearance. With a line or two of music to help, one could also appreciate more easily the ingenuities of those episodes in which Bach is constructing fugatos on the opening notes of the next line.

These three discs contain some of Bach's greatest music, none the less good for being unfamiliar; it is played here as it should be played. Saving half a crown a week, you could buy one disc every four months, all three in a year.

R.F.

BACH. Trio Sonatas: No. 1 in E flat major, BWV525; No. 2 in C minor, BWV526; No. 3 in D minor, BWV527; No. 4 in E minor, BWV528. John Eggington (organ). London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50123 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). Recorded at the Organ of Meaux Cathedral.

Sonatas Complete:
Germani
Walcha

(3/55) (4/55) (H) CLP1025-6
(3/56) APM14508-4

Choice of tempo and registration in the playing of organ works must be dictated, to some extent, by the building in which they are performed. John Eggington adopts slower tempos, in general, than Helmut Walcha, particularly so in the *Adagio* of the E flat Sonata and the *Allegro* final movement of the C minor Sonata (which sounds ponderous) and his phrasing is not always so crisp and clearly defined as Walcha's—for example, in the opening movement of the C minor and the *Vivace* (after a

brief *Adagio*) of the E minor Sonatas. I do not myself find his registrations as satisfying as Walcha's, particularly in the slow movements of the C minor and D minor Sonatas, but this is a matter of taste.

There is much to like in this careful playing and the organ has some beautifully mellow stops: but comparison (to my mind) favours Walcha for greater liveliness, and clarity of parts. The pedal parts in the O.L. recording tend to be indistinct, though otherwise the recording is good.

O.L. are to be commended for putting scrolls between the movements and for getting two sonatas on each side in their proper sequence. D.G.G. put no scrolls, and three sonatas on each of their two discs, with a change over to complete one of them in each case.

A.R.

BACH, J. S. Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV533. Prelude and Fugue in B minor, BWV544. Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV547. Pierre Cochereau (organ). London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50125 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). Recorded at the Organ of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris.

Play Bach slowly and loudly enough on a large organ, and people will immediately talk about the work's majesty and grandeur. On that basis this is all exceedingly majestic: the Notre Dame organ, seemingly flat out in places, roars mightily, and M. Cochereau's favourite speed appears to be *Adagissimo*. He is a very accomplished player, and the engineers have caught the weight of tone faithfully without any distortion; but is the result Bach? The great B minor stands up to the treatment best, since there is grandiosity innate in the music; but the Prelude of the C major is grossly overweight, and the Fugue—a magnificent four-part specimen, which suddenly acquires a fifth part in augmentation near the end—sounds merely laboured like this; and the E minor is enormously portentous. I hope I shall not be thought offensive if I suggest that this is a disc for the organ-lover rather than for the Bach specialist.

P.B.

BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 29 in B flat major, Op. 106, "Hammerklavier". Solomon (piano). H.M.V. ALP1141 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Gulda (1/52) LXT2624
Horszowski (4/53) PL6750
Backhaus (4/53) LXT2777
Kempff (4/56) DGM18146

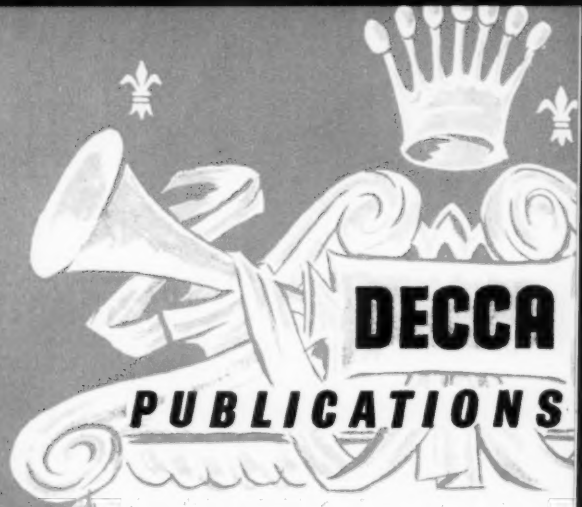
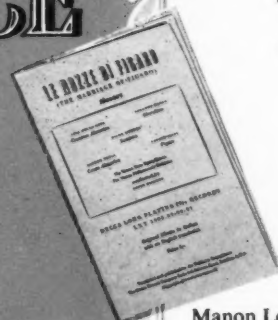
Solomon and the "Hammerklavier" is a conjunction of enthralling interest, and whether this is the best performance or not hardly matters, and in any case with a work of this length and complexity I would hardly presume to judge except on the basis of months of listening. He is more impassioned, less restrained than Kempff and let us leave it at that. I do not think you would wish for any of the other older recordings except for the fine one by Horszowski. Unfortunately as regards quality Solomon's is not the best recording, though good enough judged by the standards of three or four years ago. There are signs of slight distortion on some of



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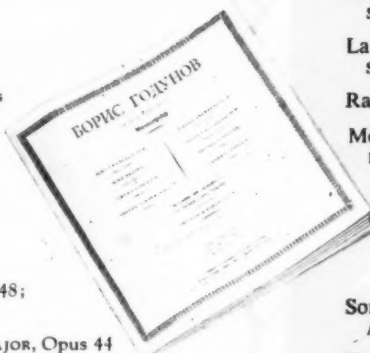
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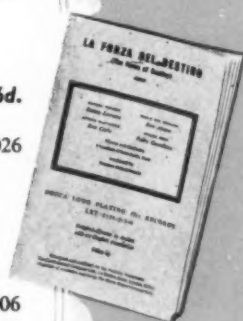
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(BWV. 525); No. 2 in C minor (BWV. 526);

No. 3 in D minor (BWV. 527);

No. 4 in E minor (BWV. 528)

John Eggington

at the Organ of Meaux Cathedral

OL 50123 (Oiseau-Lyre L.P.)

J. S. Bach

PRELUDES AND FUGUES: in C major (BWV. 547);

in E minor (BWV. 533); in B minor (BWV. 544)

Pierre Cochereau

at the Organ of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

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C. P. E. Bach

CONCERTO IN A MINOR

FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA

(Wotquenne 166);

CONCERTO IN G MAJOR

FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA

(Wotquenne 169)

Jean-Pierre Rampal

with l'Ensemble Orchestral

de l'Oiseau-Lyre

conducted by Louis de Froment

OL 50121 (Oiseau-Lyre L.P.)



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the high notes, and the tone is a little hard generally. I could do nothing on my apparatus to correct this; in any case the deficiency is not apparent on the Kempff disc.

Solomon takes the first movement much faster than Kempff—in fact at about 120 crotchets to the minute, the same tempo as Gulda, and only beaten by Schnabel (who accepts Beethoven's fantastic metronome mark of 136 crotchets to the minute). Solomon's tempo seems just right for the fiery interpretation he brings to this music. In the slow movement on the other hand he is the slowest of the pianists listed above, and, as in his famous disc of the "Moonlight" sonata, he shows that he can sustain a very slow tempo as can no other modern pianist. This is playing of the most sublime kind; the pianist has the whole essence of the music distilled in his fingers and there is nothing lost. I did not however feel that he quite held my interest in the *largo* introduction to the final fugue, which he again plays very slowly indeed. After the immensities of the slow movement proper, the mind can hardly cope with yet slower music immediately after at the best of times, and Solomon's tempi make the task harder than usual. But I am well aware that I may be revealing deficiencies in my own staying powers rather than in Solomon's performance. There is at least nothing slow about the fugue. He plays it at a break-neck speed and yet with astonishingly clear articulation, a really tremendous piece of piano playing. The way he fines down the tone in the last page is beyond praise.

In short, this is a very great performance of a very great piece of music. R.F.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Sonatas: No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110; No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111. Wilhelm Kempff (piano). D.G.G. DGM18045 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Coupled as above:
Backhaus (10/54) LXT2939
Sonata No. 31: Hess (11/54) (H)ALP1160
Sonata No. 32: Solomon (4/56) (H)ALP1160
Katchen (6/56) LXT5187

I found Kempff a little disappointing in the A flat sonata. To begin with the piano tone is not quite up to D.G.G.'s usual standard, especially at the top of the keyboard. But the chief trouble is the pianist's surprisingly cavalier treatment of Beethoven's markings. He takes the scherzo absurdly slow, is wayward over its rhythm (which surely should be tight as a drum), makes a crescendo up the first *ff* instead of suddenly exploding at that point, ignores Beethoven's phrasing in the *piu adagio* near the start of the slow movement, and so on. He plays the fugue with considerable feeling, but by and large Backhaus and Myra Hess give a much more dependable reading. Myra Hess is the best of the three in my opinion, her scherzo full of vigour and fire, though on her recording the piano tone is rather fluffy round the edges; Backhaus is much better recorded.

Kempff gives an altogether better account of the C minor. In Beethoven's tumultuous movements this pianist approaches the music

with a restraint that is often interesting, though at other times restraint is less apparent in his playing. He is however faced with a really superlative performance from Katchen. Katchen brings more technique to the first movement and makes the repeat in it, which Kempff omits. He can enliven the music by "placing" a phrase with the least possible touch of rubato, and he can produce, by playing with absolute simplicity, a kind of hushed awe as in the Arietta. Kempff takes this movement very slightly faster and plays it extremely well, managing the final trills very fluently. But Katchen's version has more atmosphere, more wonder about it. Solomon is not too well recorded, and last April A.P. found his playing a little below his usual standard. Backhaus is still well worth considering if you want Beethoven's last two sonatas on one disc. R.F.

CHOPIN. Nocturnes, Nos. 1-10. Stefan Askenase (piano). D.G.G. DGM 18262 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Rubinstein (9/54) (H)ALP1157

This is a most lovely record. Askenase plays with the utmost poetry, but not at all with the utmost rhythmic freedom. This is not an over-romanticised, or even a highly romanticised Chopin; the pulse of the music remains firmly under control, and is allowed to vary readily over long periods, less readily over short ones—more often it continues with some determination, and the roulade, the cadenza, or the arpeggio that has seemingly taken wings manages to return to earth at precisely the right moment. In this there is of course no great novelty (it is traditionally the way Chopin himself played), but I do not recall ever hearing a more convincing demonstration of it.

As Askenase has also the advantage of very good recording, this is obviously a most desirable version of the Nocturnes. In comparison the fine playing of Rubinstein, in his H.M.V. set, is more conventionally romantic; and indeed it does most certainly score a point here and there to set against those lost on other occasions (in the G minor and A flat major Nocturnes in particular—in these Askenase seems to me to be incomparably more poetic). But the recording of Rubinstein's H.M.V. disc is variable, and that of the D.G.G. disc is consistent at the best level of its competitor; I would have no difficulty in deciding in its favour. M.M.

CHOPIN. Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35.

SHOSTAKOVITCH. Prelude and Fugue in D minor, Vol. II, No. 24; Prelude and Fugue in C major, Vol. I, No. 1; Prelude and Fugue in D major, Vol. I, No. 5. Emil Gilels (piano). Columbia 33CX1364 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Sonata No. 2:
Backhaus (2/51) LXT2535
Novas (7/53) PL7360
Horowitz (11/53) (H)ALP1087
Schlieter (6/55) (H)ALP1243
Katchen (8/56) LXT5093

There is some fine playing on this disc, and the quality of the sound is excellent. I

do not think that Gilels gives as good a performance of the Chopin Sonata as Katchen, whose record I reviewed last month, but he comes within measurable distance and his technique as revealed in the difficult passages is tremendous. He begins by accentuating the first quaver in each group of the main tune, giving it a rumba effect, but after a wonderful performance of the scherzo, seems not quite at home in the funeral march; the trio sections lacks the absolute simplicity that Katchen and Horowitz bring to it, and the exact value of the dotted quavers in the main section keeps varying. He tears off the last movement at a tremendous speed, but again just misses the even hushed tone that the music needs.

Shostakovitch wrote his 24 preludes and fugues (one in each key, as in the "48") soon after the war and they were published in 1955. The composer himself has recorded the lot, but these discs, available in America, are not yet to be had in this country. Gilels starts with the last one, a splendid work. The prelude hints at the fugue subject, and the fugue itself, a very long one with two subjects which eventually come together, builds up to a tremendous climax. The C major, the first of the set, is short and very simple. The restful fugue subject is said to come from a cantata written to celebrate peace. The D major is gay and makes a good end. I do not myself like to hear fugue subjects banged out with the emphasis Gilels gives them, and occasionally his pedalling is not impeccable, but generally speaking he gives an excellent account of some unfamiliar and interesting music. R.F.

LISZT. Fantasia and Fugue on "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam". Pierre Cochereau (organ). London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50126 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). Recorded at the Organ of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris.

Demessieux (4/53) LXT2773

For the dramatic thunders of this great showpiece, the wider range of colour and volume of the Notre Dame organ should, in theory, carry the day against any smaller instrument; but in fact I prefer Jeanne Demessieux's existing version to this new one, even though M. Cochereau's talents are not in question. He obviously has a fine sense of building up a phrase, he has a most efficient technique, he takes the fugue with real rhythmic gusto, and he avoids the excess of staccato into which Mlle Demessieux falls in her efforts to secure clean articulation. Only some of his registration changes sound clumsy—e.g. on to the big diminished seventh which starts off the *Allegro deciso*. He has, however, to cope with a considerably more reverberant building, which may well have dictated some of his slower tempi—which he makes entirely convincing; but there is little he can do to get true clarity in the running semiquavers of the fugue, silence in dramatic pauses, or even audibility in the pedals under the big held chords at the beginning. Nor can he avoid the action noises which force themselves on our attention in quieter passages. He might, however, have used

different registration in places—not merely changing, for example, the rather fierce reed he uses for lyrical passages in the *Adagio*, but avoiding some of the out-of-tune reed choruses which strike the ear unpleasantly on first hearing and become increasingly annoying on repetition: there is a shocker, for example, at the *Un poco più di moto* towards the end of the second section. Organ enthusiasts will nevertheless (and rightly) want to hear this recording, to which the engineers have given their best attention. L.S.

MOZART. Sonata in F major, K.Anh.

135. Sonata No. 7 in C major, K.309. Sonata No. 12 in F major, K.332. Sonata No. 4 in E flat major, K.282. Paolo Spagnolo (piano). Decca LXT5219 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

This is cool, fluent, and enjoyable playing, rhythmically vital if a little inflexible, and the choice of sonatas is excellent. The F major, K.Anh.135, is the charming Sonatina with its two, originally unrelated, movements in the same key, a derivative work that Köchel excluded from his main catalogue and put into a supplementary list. The other F major work (K.332) is one of the finest of the Sonatas and is played by Paolo Spagnolo without any exaggeration of the dynamics, as sometimes occurs, in its dramatic *sf* passages—for this is not Beethoven. The pianist sings his way—so to speak—through the lovely slow movement, in which those readers who possess the excellent Associated Board Edition (Bowen-Raymar) will notice some small textual differences in the playing of the coda. Spagnolo's strong rhythmic sense stands him in good stead in the brilliant finale.

I also particularly enjoyed the performance of the E flat major Sonata which begins, it may be remembered, with a slow movement and one carrying many of Mozart's original dynamic directions; these are not invariably observed by the pianist, but his playing of the charming movement is expressive. The final movement could have been done with more wit. The piano tone is of the right character and volume and well recorded. A.R.

SCHUMANN. Davidsbündler Dances, Op. 6. Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 14 ("Concert sans Orchestre"). Friedrich Wührer (piano). Vox PL8860 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Davidsbündler Dances:

Joerg Demus

(11/54) WLP5232

The *Davidsbündler* (they can scarcely be called "dances", as the composer himself realised when it came to the second edition) represent perhaps the most intimate revelation of Schumann's feelings. Containing, as he admitted, his happily excited thoughts just before his marriage to Clara Wieck (on a thematic figure by whom the work is based), the pieces are each attributed to one or other element of his schizoid personality—the poetic and reflective Eusebius or the forceful and passionate Florestan. As such, there is a constant alternation of reverie and energy, which makes the set a fascinating entity. There exists already an excellent

recorded performance by Demus, which in terms of tone quality is not matched by this new one (where the piano tone is distinctly shallow); but Wührer's actual playing, like that of his rival, is very fine: both these Viennese pianists have vitality, sure technique and attack. The basic difference between them may perhaps best be expressed by calling Wührer a Florestan type and Demus a Eusebius. The former has greater fire and incisiveness, but the latter greater subtlety of nuance not only in pieces like the *innig* No. 2, but also in the *frisch* No. 8. Demus captures the heart-easing simplicity of No. 11 better, but Wührer brings out better the humour of No. 12.

Choice here may depend on the backing: by the adoption of speeds just that bit faster than Demus's, and by cutting some of the numerous repeats, Wührer has time for the long Third Sonata (sub-titled *Concerto without orchestra* by Schumann's publisher) written at much the same time as the *Davidsbündler*, though later revised and shortened. Over this work there has always been disagreement among critics, some finding fault with it for weakness and repetition, others considering it the most interesting of the three sonatas. My personal opinion of it as music being neither here nor there, I will say no more than that Wührer gives an eloquent account of its rhapsodies which can be cordially praised. It should be remarked, in passing, that on neither side of this disc is the surface as quiet as might be. L.S.

CHORAL AND SONG

BACH. "Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot"—Cantata for the 1st Sunday after Trinity, BWV39. Gunthild Weber (soprano), Lore Fischer (alto), Herman Schey (bass), Berliner Motettenchor, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann. D.G.G. Archive AP13003 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

This beautiful Cantata, "Give the hungry thy bread", begins with an orchestral prelude in which a down-going two-quaver figure is given in succession to flutes, oboe, and strings and followed by more developed melodic writing. This prelude has been interpreted by Schweitzer as depicting a procession of the poor and suffering, and by Parry as the breaking of bread. You can take your choice: but the first suggestion seems to me the more reasonable. The second half of this wonderful chorus abandons the limping motive of the start for music of praise and rejoicing that the poor have been fed and clothed in our houses, and "so shall thy light ever break forth as though it were morrow".

The Berlin Motettenchor sing the chorus very well, though I should have liked a less staccato treatment of the florid passages, and the balance with the orchestra, here, as all through the work, is excellent.

Hermann Schey sings (or is recorded) too loudly in the recitative following, after which Lore Fischer gives a good account of her touching aria, "He who ne'er so feebly striveth, to be like his Saviour trieth shall one

day in heaven be", in which oboe and violin are prominent. Hermann Schey sounds too hurried and jerky in the bass aria and hardly succeeds in conveying the sense of the words "To do good and have compassion forget thou not", and his insensitivity is shown up by Lore Fischer's singing of the recitative, before the Choral, in which real meaning is given to the words. Before this comes a lovely soprano aria, "Father, all I bring Thee, Thou Thyself hast given me" which, unfortunately, Gunthild Weber sings in a hasty and breathy kind of way that disturbs the vocal line. The second side of the disc gives rather short measure. The German text only is given on the card enclosed with the disc. This is not enough: we do not all understand German. A.R.

BERLIOZ. Nuits d'Été, Op. 7. Victoria de los Angeles (soprano), Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch.

DEBUSSY. La Damselle Elue. Carol Smith (contralto), Victoria de los Angeles (soprano), Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch, Radcliffe Choral Society directed by G. Wallace Woodworth. H.M.V. ALP1368 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Nuits d'Été:

Danco, Cincinnati S.O. Johnson

Steber, S.O., Mitropoulos

La Damselle Elue:

Micheau, Collard, Brasseur Choral,

Paris Cons., Fournet

Gorge, Joly, C.-E. Orch., Inghelbrecht

(2/55) DTL93009

In his review of Eleanor Steber's recording of *Nuits d'Été* A.P. made several references to the metronome markings given to the songs, their non-observance in some of them, and the bad effect in *Villanelle*, the first song, of adopting the crotchet 96 marked. It is certainly too slow a pace, as one hears at once in playing the new recording, or the Decca. Danco sings this song in better style than los Angeles, but there is no point in comparing voices of such fundamentally different quality: it is important that los Angeles uses more variety of tone and is, I think, more responsive to the meaning of the words than Danco. I thought A.P.'s review of Steber rather harsh, though I agree that her interpretation is not wholly satisfactory. It is, to my mind, too operatic: but, while the A flats in *Le Spectre de la rose* are certainly out of focus, I did not detect much "vocal malaise" elsewhere. The voice is a beautiful one and the recording of voice and orchestra is better than in the five-year-old Decca disc. In the H.M.V. issue it is still better and the orchestral accompaniments are far more idiomatically played under Charles Munch. The tempo of *Le Spectre de la rose*, metronomically correct, is surely too slow (quaver 96) and robs the song of the dream-like feel of the dance it should have. Maggie Teyte, on a 78, took it perhaps a little too quickly, but her rendering is unsurpassable. None of the other singers give such meaning to the last lines of the poem. Los Angeles sings, as always, with lovely tone and rises well to the climax, but the ultimate magic

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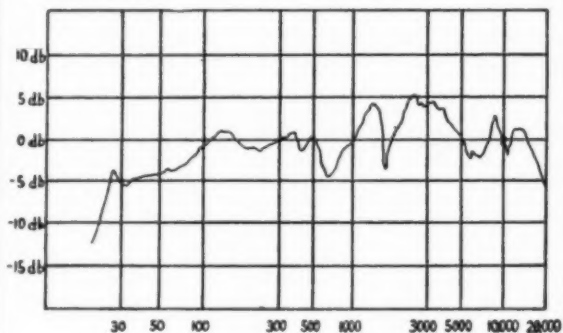


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is, to my mind, absent. She uses suitably dark tone in her singing of *Sur les lagunes*, a poignant night-piece, and catches the atmosphere of it perfectly.

Absence, in which again Maggie Teyte excelled, is better sung at the end than at the start, but is never less than good: the level, however, alters a bit in this song, the voice sounding a little more distant. The singer's tone is a bit pinched in *Au cimetière*—a song with a tryingly high vocal line—and both Danco and Steber are better in it, though Los Angeles gives us some lovely moments. The Gounod-like last song, *L'île inconnue*, is joyously sung.

Apart from a little less good recording and a rather noisy surface I prefer Decca's disc of *La Damoselle élue* to this one, which never quite lives up to the promise of the sensitively played prelude. The over-bright, rather school-girlish, voices and indistinct enunciation of the Radcliffe Choral Society are partly responsible for this—though the words of the Elisabeth Brasseur Choir were not very clear but were patently French when heard—and the too forward placing of the soloists does not help the creation of the right atmosphere. Carol Smith, the contralto, is adequate and Los Angeles sings with all her purity of tone, but never quite conveys to me the feeling that she is the Blessed Damosel as did Janine Micheau—vocally far less good. In sum the music never quite gets airborne.

A lot of people will be happy with this performance and wonder at the reservations with which I greet it, and which I can best express by saying that an indispensable sensuous element is lacking. A.R.

BERLIOZ. Requiem, Op. 5. Rochester Oratorio Society Chorus and Orchestra conducted by **Theodore Hollenbach**. Philips NBL5034-5 (two 12 in., 67s. 11d.).

"It was a prey I had long stood in ambush for", Berlioz said on the subject of the Requiem Mass. He certainly approached the sublime text as matter for highly dramatic presentation, but I find it much more than "a sepulchral sonority", as one writer puts it.

My German score renders the English title as "Grand Death Mass" and certainly the emphasis is on the dark angel but there are gleams of the *lux perpetua* here and there: or, if the work seems spiritually void to a listener, he can find plenty to interest him in the virtuosités of scoring in it and in the imagination shown.

Noise, at any rate, is not its chief element. Berlioz had to take into account the acoustics of the Chapel of St. Louis at the Invalides where the Mass, commissioned by the Minister to commemorate the French soldiers who had fallen in the Algerian campaign of 1837 was to be first performed and so greatly increased his vocal and orchestral forces for the occasion: thus, no doubt, perpetuating the legend of an infernal din.

The Mass makes great demands on the chorus and these are, on the whole, very well executed by the Rochester Oratorio Society. They sound to be a youthful body,

full of enthusiasm and determined not to be defeated. The tenors are occasionally weak and shallow in tone, as for example in the "Te decet hymnus" section of the Introit, and the sopranos sound exhausted at the end of *Lacrimosa*, a tasteless and overlong movement; but the basses shout the *Tuba mirum* through the cataclysmic orchestral outburst untriflingly. Ray de Voll, the tenor soloist in *Sanctus*, a movement of welcome lyrical relief, strains painfully at his high notes and is really not weighty enough for his part. The orchestra plays well for Theodore Hollenbach who directs a performance lacking, needless to say, the magnificence and subtlety Sir Thomas Beecham brings to the work, but vivid and exciting and by no means insensitive in those portions of the score that call for imaginative treatment, such as *Quid sum miser*: to enjoy which, Berlioz said, required "a very fine musical sensibility."

The celebrated orchestral scoring of *Hostias*, which has several repetitions of a full chord divided between eight trombones playing a low note in unison and three flutes filling in the rest of the chord above, also comes out well and so does the extraordinarily imaginative scoring of *Agnus Dei* (the opening section) in which wood-wind chords are faintly echoed by the violas which hold the harmony as the wind cease to be heard—an effect noted perhaps both by Stravinsky and by Holst.

In both cases men's voices only are used but in the *Offertorium*, the best movement in the work, the women sing in octaves with the men almost throughout at a medium pitch. One would think that the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* from Monteverdi's *Vespers* must have been the model for this astonishing movement, so identical is the procedure: but there is no evidence that Berlioz had seen the score though he mentions the composer in his *Treatise on Orchestration*. The gradual soft establishing of the chord of D major, note by note, at "promisisti" is one of the most magical effects in all music. Other unforgettable things are the wailing figure that haunts the opening *Requiem aeternam* and *Kyrie*, and the utter surprise of the quiet start of *Dies irae*. *Tuba mirum*, as several writers on Berlioz have noted, is commonplace in material, however shattering in effect; it has no more artistic value than Napoleon's huge and hideous sarcophagus in Les Invalides. *Rex tremendae majestatis* is a much grander and more truly worthy piece and the utter contrast between it and the lovely *a capella* chorus *Quaerens me* is memorable.

The balance between chorus and orchestra is reasonably good except in the opening number, in which the latter is too faintly heard.

The recording needs a good reproducer and even so there may be trouble with excessive reverberation, as I have found, in the loud portions.

There is only one other recording, a transfer from 78's on the American catalogues, so this later one—the first to reach us—is to be welcomed. The text is given on one of the sleeves, an excellent note on the work on the other. A.R.

BRAHMS. Eight Gipsy Songs, Op. 103. DVORAK. Gipsy Melodies, Op. 55. Hilde Zadek (soprano), **Geza Frid** (piano). Philips SBR6208 (10 in., 24s. 0d.).

Gipsy Melodies, Op. 55:
Lichtegg, Haueslein

(5/55) LW5146

The right kind of feeling and impulse are here, but from first to last Hilde Zadek hardly ever sings a well-centred note and her unsteady tone and blurred vocal line rob one of any pleasure in her interpretations. This is all the more regrettable since the lovely Brahms *Zigeunerlieder* have not been recorded before on LP and the best performance of the Dvořák Gipsy Songs (Hilde Rössl-Majdan on Nixa) has now been deleted.

Miss Zadek is best in the quiet lyrical numbers of the two cycles, but even in them the tone is not really steady. Geza Frid is an alert and sensitive accompanist and the balance and recording are good. I have heard Miss Zadek in much better form than this and can only assume the recording found her on a bad day. In that case why issue it? The disc is one of Philips's cheaper issues in the "Favourite Music Series", but must not be taken as any indication of the standard achieved by the rest. A.R.

LASSUS. Neue deutsche Lieder:

Audita nova! Der Bawr von Eselzkirchen; Hört zu ein news gedicht; Baur was trägt im Sacke; Die Fasznacht; Ist keiner hie; Der wein, der schmeckt; Im lant zu Wirtenberg; Im Mayen; Tritt auff den rigel vor der thür; Ein meidlein zu dem brunnen gieng. **Chansons, Madrigals, Villanelle:** Je l'ayme bien; Un doux nenny; Hélas, quel jour; Le tems passé; En espoir vis; Or-sus, filles, que l'on me donne; Scais-tu dire l'Ave?; Un dubbio verno; Hor vi riconfortate; S'io ti vedess' una sol; Io ti vorria contar la pena mia; Tedesca: Matona mia cara ("Landsknechtstündchen"); Echo: O là, o che bon echo. **Singgemeinschaft Rudolf Lamy** directed by **Rudolf Lamy**. D.G.G. Archive APM14055 (12 in., 19s. 7½d.).

This disc gives an excellent picture of one aspect of the many-sided genius of the great sixteenth-century Netherlands composer. Here are examples of his secular (often humorous) writings in German, French and Italian, over a period of thirty years from his first published collection in 1555. We may observe his fondness for humorous dialogue pieces (*Scais-tu dire l'Ave?* and *Baur, was trägt im Sacke?*), admire the rhythmic freedom of *Hört zu ein news gedicht* and *Io ti vorria contar la pena mia*, and enjoy his subtle treatment of words.

To all these performances the Rudolf Lamy Choir brings an accomplished ensemble, an impeccable intonation and a fine flexibility. One might perhaps prefer less staccato singing in general, and clearer enunciation in the chansons (the German and Italian are considerably better in this regard); but otherwise the work of this lively and admirable body is entirely

praiseworthy. Most of the recording is very clear and forward: one or two pieces, obviously taken at a different time, are slightly less so. Only the layout of the disc may be criticised: the French pieces all follow one another with scarcely pause for breath, so that the effect of each is jostled; and perhaps one of these days D.G.G. will adopt a method of scrolling off bands which can be related to some rational system, instead of being, as at present, quite arbitrary. But such considerations are unlikely to mar our enjoyment of *Matona mia cara*, for example, which is sung with a most attractive lilt, or *O la, c'he bon echo*, of which this is easily the best recording I know. P.B.

MACHAUT. La Messe de Nostre Dame. Ten Secular Works—

Triple Ballade: Sans cuer—Amor douleur—Dame par vous; Ballade: Je puis trop bien; Motet: Qui es promesses—Ha! Fortune (Tenor: Et non est qui adjuvet); Rondeau: Puis qu'en oubli; Virelai: De tout sui si confortée; Ballade: Nes que on porroit les estoilles nombrer; Triple Ballade: De triste cuer—Certes je di—Quant vrais amans; Virelai: Se je souspir; Complainte: Tels rit au main qui au soir pleure; Double Ballade: Quant Théséus—Ne quier véoir. **Pro Musica Antiqua, Brussels**, directed by **Safford Cape**. D.G.G. Archive APM14063 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

I have a bone to pick with the D.G.G. Archive Series. It is presumably the intention of the distributors of these admirable records in this country to secure as big sales as possible. I have noted elsewhere in this issue the insufficiency of giving only the German text of a work (the Bach Cantata "Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot") but that is better than giving no information at all as to the purport of the secular works on this Machaut disc, though we are told by what forces they are sung and played. Not everyone has the collected edition of Machaut's works or understands antique French.

There are at least five editions of the so-called *Mass of Notre-Dame*, of which the one here recorded is by Charles van den Borren and Stafford Cape. It is a great improvement, as regards performance and recording, on the old *Anthologie Sonore* incomplete issue and includes the "Ite Missa est" at the end of the setting. The recording is of the direct type and the singing suffers, I think, from lack of variety in dynamics, and also from the omission, in the *Kyrie*, of the plainsong interpolations. The pace and the level of tone remain practically unchanged throughout. I should have liked to have heard a softening (and even a *ritardando*) at the long notes of "Jesu Christe" in the *Gloria*, if not, also, in the "Qui tollis peccata mundi" preceding it; and certainly at "Qui propter nos homines" in the *Credo*. Otherwise the singing is admirably clear—although recorded with an Albert-Hall-like echo. But the acute dissonance (in the Chailley edition I was using) at the *Crucifixus* seems to have been ironed out.

The secular songs, the first of them for instruments only, are quite delightful and are very well sung, and I particularly enjoyed the two Virelais, and the sonorous double-Ballade "*Quant Théséus*".

The melodic beauty and shapeliness of these songs is remarkable and they are sung and accompanied on this disc with a true understanding of the style. A.R.

STRAVINSKY. L'Histoire du Soldat.

The Devil **Robert Helpmann**
The Soldier **Terence Longdon**
The Narrator **Anthony Nicholls**
Arthur Leavins (violin), **Edmond Chesterman** (double-bass), **Jack Brymer** (clarinet), **Gwydion Brooke** (bassoon), **Richard Walton** (trumpet), **Sidney Langston** (trombone), **Stephen Whittaker** (timpani) conducted by **John Pritchard**. H.M.V. ALP1377 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). As performed at the Edinburgh Festival, 1954, in collaboration with Glyndebourne Opera.

Ensemble, Vardi (12/55) PL8900

The difference between this new recording of *The Soldier's Tale* and the excellent one issued by Vox lies not merely in the exchange of English for American voices (which, of course, alters the *locale*) but in the use of a far more racy, indeed a brilliant, translation of the text by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black and, also, of a far more dramatic ending.

The Soldier is hesitating to cross the frontier to visit his Mother, remembering the Devil's warning. "Say yes, say yes, say yes," reiterates the evil voice and then comes a devilish cackle of high-pitched laughter and we realise the Soldier is lost—at that point the instruments break into the Devil's Triumphal March. This terrifying moment is only hinted at in the Vox issue; there is no satanic laughter and the March ends with the loud drumming customary when the Suite is played. On the H.M.V. disc the drumming softens and we hear three times the voice of the Princess who was following the Soldier a little way behind, calling faintly "Joseph"; the effect is indescribably poignant.

Eric Walter-White says in his book on the composer that the work is not really effective in the theatre. This may be so—I didn't see the Edinburgh Festival performance in 1954, reproduced here—but it is certainly effective on disc with one exception, the Three Dances (Tango, Waltz and Ragtime) which seem, the last particularly, long. The American instrumental group score here, as they play the music in completely idiomatic style whereas the English group are frankly a bit dull. I liked also their prolongation of the held chords in the Great Choral under the voice. The Vox issue is more forward than the H.M.V. and has rather less atmosphere. Both groups of players and actors are, in general, admirable, though Robert Helpmann is, I think a more devilish Devil than Frederic Warriner, but with such a very good translation, of perhaps a slightly different version of the text, the work makes a greater impact. It is extremely well and most realistically recorded. A.R.

PURCELL. Two Anthems: In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; O sing unto the Lord. **Five Secular Songs:** Soft notes and gently raised; 'Tis wine was made to rule the day; O what a scene does entertain my sight; When the cock begins to crow; How pleasant is this flowery plain. **Saltire Singers** with **Instrumental Ensemble**. D.G.G. Archive APM14059 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

The Archive cards give a lot of useful information, but sometimes not enough. There is, for example, no indication of the nature of the "secular songs" recorded on this disc. In actual fact, "Soft notes and gently raised", "O what a scene", and "How pleasant is this flowery plain", are secular cantatas for soprano and tenor (the last) or soprano and bass, with recorders and continuo. "Tis wine was made to rule the day" and "When the cock begins to crow" are three-part songs (two sopranos and bass) with continuo, though (and I think more realistically) the tenor takes over the first soprano part in this recording in place of wine.

The performance of these little works must not be judged by the opening number, "Soft notes", in which the soprano sounds tremulous and fails to make her words tell. Matters improve thereafter and there is some really delightful singing and accompanying. I enjoyed, particularly, the drinking song and the song about the cock-crow, with realistic imitations of the owl and the cricket, etc. The words are commendably clear in these songs, and in the rest.

The first of the anthems, "In thee, O Lord", is not a specially interesting work, but "O sing unto the Lord" is a splendid piece which foreshadows Handel's later achievements. Sung by four solo voices it lacks the weight a choir would add: but otherwise this, and the other anthem, are very well sung and the words are clearly heard. All in all this is a delightful record. A.R.

OPERATIC

BOITO. Mefistofele.

Mefistofele **Boris Christoff** (bass)
Faust **Giacinto Prandelli** (ten.)
Margherita **Orietta Moscucci** (sop.)
Marta **Amalia Pini** (con.)
Wagner **Piero de Palma** (ten.)
Orchestra and Chorus of the Opera House, Rome, conducted by **Vittorio Gui**. Chorus Master: **Giuseppe Conga**. H.M.V. ALP1369-70 (two 12 in., 79s. 3d.). Recorded in the Opera House, Rome.

Capuana (8/54) ULF9230-1/3

This new recording of *Mefistofele* omits the whole of the Fourth Act of the opera, which contains two scenes from the second part of Goethe's *Faust* that symbolise, in the union between Helen and Faust, the marriage of Greek and German ideals. I cannot personally regret the omission as it makes for better dramatic continuity to have the death of Margaret in Act 3 followed by the death of Faust in Act 5 (the scene being once again his laboratory, as in Act 1), whereas the sudden switch to

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SEMBRICH : *Norma* : Casta Diva
SEMBRICH : *Semiramide* : Bel raggio
MELBA : *Hamlet* : Mad scene
MELBA and CARUSO : *Bohème* : Soave fanciulla
CARUSO : *Favorita* : Spir'to gentil
SCOTTI : *Falstaff* : L'Onore
SEMBRICH and SCOTTI : *Don Pasquale* : Vado, corro
PLANCON : *Damnation of Faust* : Chanson de la puce
RENAUD : *Herodiade* : Vision fugitive
SEMBRICH : *Merry Widow* : Vilja
CALVE : *Carmen* : Habanera
FARRAR : *Manon* : Gavotte
CARUSO : *Pagliacci* : No, pagliaccio non son. 42/6

CSLP501 McCORMACK and MARSH : *Carmen* : Parle-moi de ma'mere
AMATO and MATZENAUER : *Carmen* : Si tu m'aimes
CARUSO : *Macbeth* : Ah la paterna mano
CLEMENT : *Manon* : Le reve
CARUSO and FARRAR : *Manon* : On l'appelle Manon
DESTINN : *Aida* : O Patria mia
HEMPEL : *Puritani* : Qui la voce
HEMPEL and AMATO : *Traviata* : Dite alla giovine
MUZIO : *Bohème* : Mi chiamano Mimi
McCORMACK : *Joseph* : Champs paternels
ALDA : *Manon Lescaut* : In quelle trine morbide
RUFFO : *Tosca* : Gia, mi dicon venal
RUFFO : *Gioconda* : O Monumento
SLEZAK : *Queen of Sheba (Goldmark)* : Magische Tone
CARUSO : *Manon Lescaut* : Donna non vidi mai 42/6

CSLP502 CARUSO : *Africana* : Deh, ch'io ritorni
GIGLI : *Andrea Chenier* : Improvviso
HARY GARDEN : *Carmen* : Air des cartes
AUSTRAL : *Flying Dutchman* : Santa's ballad
MARTINELLI : *William Tell* : O muto asil
PONSELLE, MARTINELLI and PINZA : *Forza del Destino* : final trio
CHALAPIAN and KLINE : *Don Quixote (Massenet)* : Death scene
GALLI-CURCI : *Hamlet* : Mad scene
ONEGIN : *Don Carlo* : O don fatale
KOSHETZ : *Prince Igor* : Jaroslavna's aria
SCHIPA : *Barber of Seville* : Se il mio nome 42/6

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LEMNITZ : *Nozze di Figaro* : Dove sono
LEIDER : *Don Giovanni* : Or sai chi l'Onore
MELCHIOR : *Walkure* : Winterstürme
FLAGSTAD : *Oberon* : Ozeanarie
KIPNIS and RUZICKA : *Rosenkavalier* : Ochs' Waltz scene
POINS : *Lakme* : Bell song
RETHBERG : *Ballo in Maschera* : Morro, ma prima
TIBBETT, BAMPTON, MARTINELLI : *Simone Boccanegra* : Act 3 scene
BJORLING : *Trovatore* : Ah si ben mio
RAISA : *Andrea Chenier* : La mamma morta
SOUZE : *Ernani* : Ernani involami 42/6

CSLP504 MAYNOR : *Louise* : Depuis le jour
BAMPTON : *Damnation of Faust* : D'amour l'ardente flamme
TRAUBEL : *Alceste* : Divinities du Styx
WARREN : *Contes d'Hoffmann* : Scintille diamant
TEYTE : *Tableau Parlant (Gretzy)* : Vous etiez
MILANOV : *Norma* : Casta Diva
GIGLI and ELMO : *Trovatore* : Ai nostri monti
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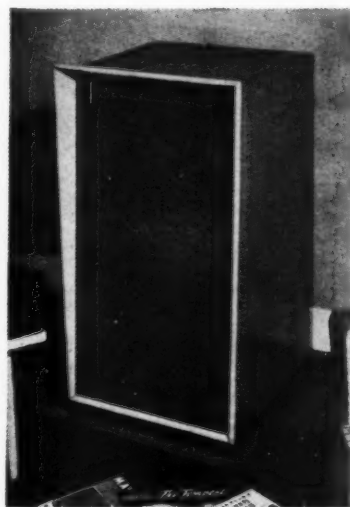
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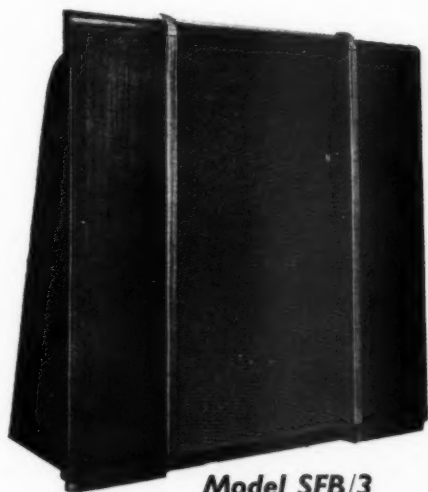


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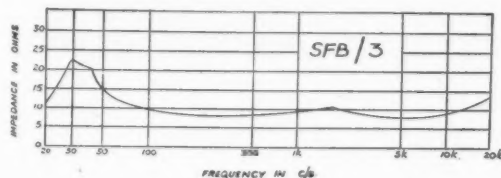
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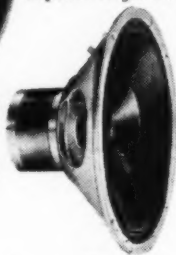
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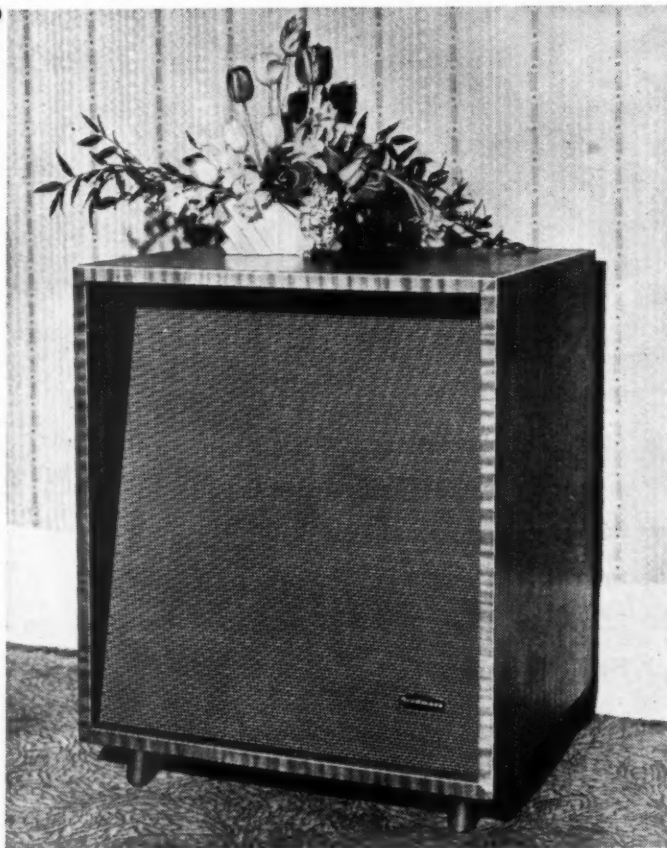


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Greek territory in Act 4 seems unnecessarily dragged in. A number of other cuts are made, only one being at all extensive; this one comes at the start of Act 1, in which the curtain is brought up on the entrance of Faust and Wagner, the opening chorus being omitted.

Vittorio Gui's handling of the Prologue does not have the overwhelming effect P.H.-W. noted in his enthusiastic review of the Toscanini disc (H.M.V. ALP1363), but it has distinct merits of its own. One misses the boys' voices in the Cherubins chorus of the enchanting vocal scherzo, and the quicker tempo and sharply edged treatment of the instrumental scherzo preceding it, but the Rome Opera Chorus do very well and the big climaxes are exciting.

Neither H.M.V.'s Nicola Moscona or Nixa's Giulio Neri can stand up to Boris Christoff's Mephistofele, which is a virtuoso performance modelled, like the singer's Boris, on that of Chaliapin. Christoff is recorded as if he were singing from the front row of the stalls. His "Ave Signor" is terrific, his use of portamenti liberal, but the voice is really out of focus. Giacinto Prandelli is a much more lyrical and sensitive Faust than Gianni Poggi and sings his lovely solo "Dai campi, dai prati" in Act 1 in excellent style. Needless to say Christoff makes the most of his solo "Son lo spirito che nega", which is spine-chilling.

Orietta Moscucci is a touching and poignant Margaret, acting well with her voice and producing pleasing tone except above the stage, when any pressure makes her become shrill. Rosetta Noli was more satisfactory in this respect, but less so in sensitivity.

The Garden Scene and The Night of the Sabbath are both well done—though the balance in the former when all four voices are engaged is rather poor—and I was haunted for some time by Christoff's "Su camina, camina, camina", and by the spirit of evil that pervades the Sabbath Night scene, in which Christoff is, of course, the dominating factor. The witches, however, are too refined.

The brief Third Act, Margaret's death, is Boito's masterpiece. Orietta Moscucci begins "L'altra notte" excellently, conveying the fevered mind of the poor girl in her tone, but the rapid climaxes defeat her—they are smudgily sung—though she manages the two cadenzas well and sings the whole of the second one, as Rosetta Noli did not.

The exquisite duet "Lontano, lontano" is most beautifully sung by both Moscucci and Prandelli and is another of the things in this uneven but often strangely beautiful opera that haunt one for days.

Faust's death, in Act 5, is not nearly so poignant—he appears to be getting off very lightly—but the entry of the chorus, with the lovely "Ave Signor" melody from the Prologue, and Mephistofele's gradual loss of power under the shower of roses, makes an effective end.

The orchestral playing is good and one feels that Gui loves this music and is giving his best to it. Some of it has faded and seems amateurish, but one is—if unfamiliar

with the opera as a whole—continually being surprised by imaginative and poetical moments achieved by quite simple means but strangely memorable. It is, in this respect, perhaps the most fascinating opera one knows.

The recording, apart from the criticisms mentioned above, is spacious and much superior to that of the Nixa performance: and the big climaxes are well contained by my reproducer. A.R.

MOZART. Bastien und Bastienne.

Bastienne Rita Streich (sop.)
Bastien Richard Holm (tenor)
Colas Toni Blankenheim (bass)
Repetiteur Herbert List
Munich Chamber Orchestra conducted by Christoph Stepp. D.G.G. DGM18280 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).
Pritchard (9/54) ABL3010

This is the version to go for supposing that you want a LP *Bastien und Bastienne*—and no one need blush if he does not. The version under Pritchard was graceful as far as the orchestra went, but the singing lacked charm, even more so than on the deleted Nixa set (with two women). Here the heroine sings most pleasingly, the tenor has some character and the bass is not too heavy-footed. The music is smoothly brought to life: but the spoken passages sound rather dim. This is partly due to D.G.G.'s predilection for recording somewhere cavernous. Truth, the proverb tells us, lives at the bottom of a well. The German engineers seem to have taken this information all too literally. Though the singing is on the whole agreeably helped out by the envelope of resonance which surrounds the voices (as in the same company's *Magic Flute*), the short spoken exchanges come at us from the basement and up a stone staircase. However this is a matter of taste. Personally I much prefer it to deadness. This early (and thereby interesting) work of the genius is worthily put forward. P.H.-W.

MOZART. Qual mi conturba i sensi—
Fuor del mar; Ah, no sarebbe il
viver mio—Non temer, amato bene,
K.490, from "Idomeneo", Act 2.
Dalla sua pace (Act 1); Il mio
tesoro (Act 2) from "Don Giovanni".
Un' aura amorosa from "Cosi fan
Tutte", Act 1. Ah, se fosse intorno
from "Titus", Act 1. Léopold
Simoneau (tenor), Vienna Sym-
phony Orchestra conducted by
Bernhard Paumgartner. Philips
ABR4053 (10 in., 28s. 8d.).

Last month it was Simoneau on L'Oiseau Lyre recording Mozart arias; different arias, this month, and different recording. Either the tenor is in better form or the recording is more flattering. Perhaps both. The results seem to me more pleasurable all round. In the lovely aria from *Cosi*, this tenor comes within an ace of singing—not merely acceptably, but like a master. He just falls short of the grace and floating tone, the slight veiling or withdrawal down a real diminuendo which would proclaim the master. Instead, there is musical sense and warm feeling and a solid, well supported

line. "Dalla sua pace" and "Il mio tesoro" are most efficiently sung. There is no failure even in the long runs. But who would dream of summing up a McCormack or a Schipa in such a phrase? The *Idomeneo* arias do not overlap the last month's final prayer from that opera. The "Fuor del mar" is Idomeneo in Act 2 facing the crisis with courage and it was written as a show piece for Raaf, the 65-year-old creator of the role, who must indeed have had something to show, for it tests any tenor severely. Richard Lewis has also made it: but Simoneau's version is I think slightly the better, even though the lower notes show how dull his voice can be once away from the middle and mezzo forte mark. However it is a useful acquisition.

The other aria is not Idomeneo's at all. It is the optional aria—apparently for Act 2—for Idamante (the castrato role, created by the eunuch soprano Vincenzo del Prato). Hilde Gueden popped it into her collection, and with violin obbligato one would say it was never devised for a tenor (since it takes in a high B flat) yet seems to have been sung only by the tenor who was substituted for the castrato when the opera was revived privately in 1786. Simoneau sings it fluently enough, but his timbre against the violin sorts oddly, I think. However it is of considerable interest besides being a fine piece. P.H.-W.

VERDI. Romanza: Me pellegrina ed orfana (Act 1); Recit.: Son giunta! Grazie, O Dio! Aria: Madre, Madre, pietosa Vergine; La Vergine degli Angeli (Act 2); Recit.: La vita è inferno all' infelice; Aria: Oh tu che in seno agli angeli; Duet: Solenne in quest' ora; Recit.: Morir! tremenda cosa! Aria: Urna fatale del mio destino (Act 3). Duet; Invano Alvaro. Aria: Pace, pace, mio Dio! Finale; Trio: Io muojo (Act 4); from "La Forza del Destino". Zinka Milanov (soprano), Jan Peerce (tenor), Leonard Warren (baritone), Raymond Keast (baritone), Nicola Moscona (bass), Robert Shaw Chorale conducted by Robert Shaw, R.C.A. Victor Orchestra conducted by Renato Cellini and Jonel Perlea. H.M.V. ALP1371 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

This is a splendid bargain however you look at it, being "all you want from *Forza*" on one record. True, the baritone aria is divided by a turn over, otherwise the amount in the way of big scenes from the opera which is included is remarkably generous. The only scenes one misses badly are Leonora's duet with the padre guardiano, the "Il santo specho" episode in the same monastery scene, and possibly the character set-pieces for the mezzo and the comic friar. Otherwise, it is—so to speak—all there.

Milanov has already given us some samples of her Leonora. It is really magnificent: the "Madre pietosa" is the equal of Ponselle or Dusolina Giannini and while quite as "beautiful" and vivid as Tebaldi and as musically and dramatic-

ally exciting as Callas. Milanov also achieves a steadiness of phrasing and—above all—of high notes which align her to the class of pre-1914 sopranos. The steadiness of her *tenuti* in "Pace pace" is thrilling; not shrieks or wobbles, but securely taken notes with the resonance perfect all through them. This is gorgeous singing and could have held its own at any period. The only defect in this aria is a slight labouring in the middle section.

In "La Vergine degli angeli" one might have preferred her a little further away from the microphone; after all, Leonora is slowly retiring to her hermit's grotto and the episode needs a touch of remoteness, but all in all this soprano, late in the day though it may be, records a sumptuous account of the role, trio and all. I should say that there is more resonance in the recording than I usually associate with H.M.V. records (especially of U.S.A. provenance as this is). Pearce is enveloped in almost as much "echo chamber" style of resonance as Rita Streich or Häfner in the Deutsche Grammophon *Magic Flute*. Whatever your taste in this matter, there is no doubt it makes Pearce sound more blooming and mellow than I have heard him for a long time (equally he may be actually singing much better and getting his resonance less exclusively nasally than heretofore). His management of the acutely testing "O tu che in segno" surpasses Tucker on Columbia (who was too lachrymose) and Del Monaco on Decca who found the cardinal phrase of this aria a cruel test. Myself I do not as much care for Pearce's individual timbre as that of either of the others mentioned, and neither his tone nor Warren's are of the kind which blend easily in the "Solenne in questa ora" duet. In the quarrel duet in Act 4, however, they sing most excitingly and in the conclusion to his big solo baritone aria Warren makes a thrilling effect. In the trio the abbot is sung by Nicola Moscona who (I'd swear) sings "Salito a Dio" at the end as if it were the hero and not the heroine who has ascended to the Lord.

Cellini conducts ably; the orchestra and chorus are everything you'd expect. For a single disc *Forza* this is highly recommended. P. H.-W.

VERDI. Aria: O Patria mia from "Aida", Act 3. **Aria: Morro, ma prima in grazia** from "Un Ballo in Maschera", Act 3. **Gre Brouwenstijn** (soprano), **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Wilhelm Loibner**. Philips NBE11035 (7 in., 11s. 10d.).

The Dutch soprano sings Amelia's plea to her husband most beautifully, rivalling both Weltsch and Rethberg (q.v.) in feeling, musicianship and vocalisation. Her Aida is also gracious and finely recorded: only at the return from the high C are we reminded of those Aidas such as Destinn (q.v.) and Eva Turner who brought off the whole excursion, ascent and descent without the faintest suggestion that danger had been encountered and passed—by good fortune. The sound is good.

I don't want to seem old-fashioned and of course "O patria mia" has to be cut if it is to go on a single side of a 78; but used we not to get these two arias a bit cheaper in the old days? P.H.-W.

VERDI. La Traviata.

Violetta Valery
Antonietta Stella (sop.)
 Flora Bervoix
Elvira Galassi (mezzo-sop.)
 Annina **Luisa Mandelli** (mezzo-sop.)
 Alfredo Germont
Giuseppe di Stefano (ten.)
 Giorgio Germont **Tito Gobbi** (bar.)
 Gastone **Giuseppe Zampieri** (ten.)
 Barone Doupoul
William Dickie (bar.)
 Marchese d'Obigny
Nicola Zaccaria (bass)
 Dottore Grenvil
Silvio Maionica (bass)
 Giuseppe **Franco Ricciardi** (ten.)
 Domestico di Flora

Vittorio Tatzzi (bass)
 Commissionario **Carlo Forti** (bass)
Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala Opera House, Milan, conducted by **Tullio Serafin**. Chorus Master: **Norberto Mola**. Columbia 33CX1370-71 (two 12 in., 79s. 3d.). Recorded in co-operation with "E.A. Teatro alla Scala", Milan.

Toscanini (2/54) (H)ALP1072-3
 Pradelli (1/55) LXT2992-4

La Traviata stands high on the Verdian stock exchange these days, though not a quarter of a century ago you would be thought a proper fogey to admit even enjoying it, let alone putting it second only to *Otello*, as I believe Mr. Shawe-Taylor does. But we can assume that its merits are well enough known to need no further exposition here: and its immense popularity is attested by the number of complete *Traviatas* we have had in the last 25 years or so—not one of them really good!

All-important of course is Violetta herself—it is, in an obvious way, a one-woman opera. The present cast, conductor, place of making and issue would all lead you to expect Callas in the title role. Why she is not there I do not know—and will not guess. Instead we have Antonietta Stella who sings the Queen in H.M.V.'s *Don Carlos* (reviewed by me last November) and who sang an exciting and loud Aida at Covent Garden last year, a young singer with a sumptuous voice. It has a lovely timbre, an even grain, a fairly even scale and a floating, effortless production. But the artist who uses this splendid instrument seems very immature as yet. You can test the great beauty of the voice itself by playing the long, easy, swooping slow waltz tune of the finale of the third scene or at such places as the note which ushers in "Gran Dio morir si giovine" in the last act. This is a voice with a lovely quality. But just how clumsily, nervously and ineffectively its owner uses it is all too apparent in the exposed simplicities of "Addio al passato" where the shaping of the phrases, the time keeping, even the intonation once, are dubious. As for fireworks or coloratura, *absent!* The "Sempre libera" of Act 1 is

caution itself. As a vocal actress, too, Signora Stella leaves much to be desired, sounding merely urgent most of the time: without gaiety in Act 1 or pathos in Act 4, apart from the conventional splurges of tone and intrusive aspirates ("H'attendo H'attendo"). But she sings with a good deal of fine intention: as in the duet "Dite alla giovine", which is sensitively done to start with. What is missing is a feeling for the line (in the sense that even Galli-Curci had it) so that Signora Stella reminds us rather of a lightning sketch artist drawing fleetly with a thick piece of charcoal or his thumb.

For comparisons—merely with those who have made *LP Traviatas*—this lady does not begin to compare with Albanese on H.M.V. for efficiency, though you may like her voice better *qua* voice: and though she is no duller than Tebaldi in the first act, and hardly more cautious sounding and heavy handed, she does not begin to compare with Tebaldi in the more intense and passionate music of the second and last act.

The H.M.V. set was from a broadcast conducted by Toscanini in which the singers sound hard driven and downright scared; the maestro sings too and whips the opera along amazingly, in a horrid dry recording. Decca, with Tebaldi being allowed every latitude by Pradelli, is sometimes rather a tame reading. But I don't think it less interesting than Serafin's, which seems to me much too slow most of the time—the impulse in the letter writing scene "Ciel dammi forza" where the clarinet theme nearly goes to sleep; and the reprise of the exquisite "O quel amor" likewise.

I don't like opera driven too fast, but surely this is simply too slow? The actual Columbia recording is slightly better than either H.M.V. or Decca, in quality and balance: and the men come in on the credit side when all is said, for Di Stefano, if not very caressing, is much better than Poggi on Decca and rather more pleasing than Pearce on H.M.V.: and Gobbi is a really impressive vocal actor. Florid singing is not now his strong suit and the tonal quality may be harsher than in Merrill's beautiful young voice (H.M.V.) or that of Warren in such arias as "Di Provenza", but he easily outshines Decca's baritone in tact and imagination.

All in all, then, this is just another *Traviata* with some good points, but something rather dull about the central performances by the Violetta and her conductor. However, those coming fresh to the work, without special standards, will find a good deal to please. Another note: like H.M.V.'s, this set is a four-side job—not six-side by Decca. P.H.-W.

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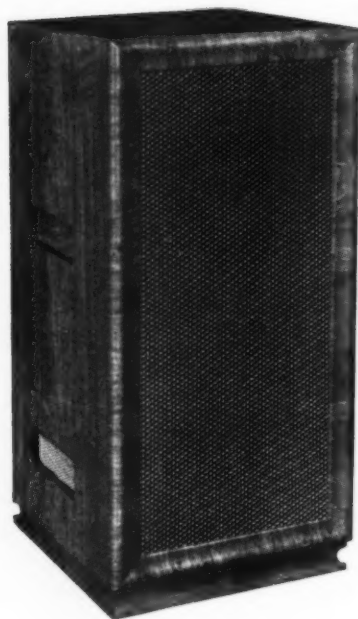
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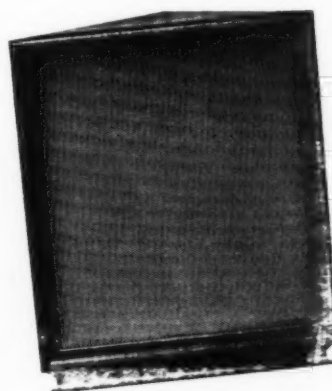


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CATLEY OPERATIC RECITAL.

Ombra leggiera from "Dinorah", Act 2 (Meyerbeer). *Sweet Echo, come tune thy lay* from "La Jolie Fille de Perth", Act 4 (Bizet). *Gwen Catley* (soprano), *Edward Walker* (flute), *Alec Whittaker* (oboe), *London Symphony Orchestra* conducted by *Stanford Robinson*. *Recit.: Gaultier Maldé! Aria: Dearest name* from "Rigoletto", Act 1 (Verdi). *Ah! Lulled by visions* from "Roméo et Juliette", Act 1 (Gounod). *A man like you* (Act 2); *See me the young village flirt* (Act 3) from "Die Fledermaus" (Joh. Strauss). *Gwen Catley* (soprano), *Philharmonia Orchestra* conducted by *Lawrence Collingwood*. H.M.V. DLP1115 (10 in., 26s. 5d.).

Gwen Catley is a popular artist and deserves to be. Not only is she petite and unassuming—which the big public likes: she sings blithely, without seeming to labour the act of vocalisation. In certain songs, this is most appealing: and the charming and simple manner with which she sings the echo song from Bizet's *Fair Maid of Perth* explains why she has such a following, especially among people who dislike Prima Donna airs and graces. It is "sweetly pretty"—with no overtones of irony intended. A goodish English "Caro nome" too is by no means to be despised; but the reason why Miss Catley is not always bracketed in the first flight of *leggiero* sopranos can be found in the Juliette waltz song in which the flourishes sound tentative only, and the whole effect is tremendously lacking in any of that chic or style which the song written for director's wife Mme. Cavahlo cries out for. So, too, with the *Dinorah* piece, though this is acceptably done, it lacks brilliance, (surely its point?).

For English versions of Adele's two *Fledermaus* songs you might do very much worse than this, Miss Catley giving what I suppose is a genuine English equivalent of the Viennese archness, but again the flick of the real stylist is just missed, especially in the "Spiel ich die Unschuld vom Lande", the second piece. Even Elisabeth Schumann did not manage the end of that quite perfectly, but how infinitely more "fetching" she made the whole thing. However, to know what the words are may be a strong argument in favour. The recording and the accompanying are excellent. P. H.-W.

Dealer News

Polyphoto, known to the majority of people living in this country for their photographic studios, are entering the record business. Their first shop should now be operating in Trafalgar Square, carrying all trademarks together with Mail Order and Export facilities.

Another special LP service is operated by Christopher Dean Ltd. of Church Street, Kensington, who have given special attention to the listening facilities required by personal shoppers. Good-quality equipment is used embodying in one case a Wharfedale triple-speaker system and in another a Tannoy York speaker.

COLLECTORS' SERIES

KREISLER. Compositions and Arrangements, played by *Fritz Kreisler*. Arrangements: *Old Folks at Home* (Foster), with *Carl Lamson* (piano). *Andante Cantabile* (Tchaikovsky), *Humoresque* (Dvořák), with *Franz Rupp* (piano). *Meditation* from "Thais" (Massenet), with *Carl Lamson* (piano). *The Rosary* (Nevin). *RCA Victor Orchestra* conducted by *Donald Voorhees*. *Londonderry Air* (arr. Grainger), with *Franz Rupp* (piano). Original compositions: *Caprice Viennois*. *Tambourin Chinois*. *Liebesfreud: Liebesleid*. *Schön Rosmarin*. *La Gitana*, with the *RCA Victor Orchestra* conducted by *Charles O'Connell*. H.M.V. CSLP 506 (12 in., 42s. 6d.).

I hope I shall not raise too many groans if I take the line those opera experts are always taking and say that nobody today can play violin trifles in the way Kreisler did! At any rate, here is a delectable selection of his old recordings, most welcome to those who remember how he used to play such things at the end of a recital.

I wish H.M.V. had not filled all of two 12-inch sides with quite so many slight pieces. (Even my enthusiasm drops a bit at *The Old Folks at Home* and *The Rosary*). Even the "Pugnani-Kreisler", still so often played, would have been more substantial and would have shown this great violinist in a style not represented on this record. However, let us be grateful that H.M.V. are at last giving us some of their hitherto buried treasure.

The side of arrangements is of very varied interest musically but always of interest for its playing. Recorded quality ranges from an apparently very old Dvořák *Humoresque* to others that sound very well indeed. But the side of original compositions is the one I really enjoy; delightful, every one of them, and played bewitchingly. Only one sounds very poor on my copy and that is *Liebesfreud*, which is odd for one would assume that it was recorded at the same time as its companion piece *Liebesleid*, which sounds excellent. Indeed, those who have the old 78's of these pieces will be astonished how well they were recorded, mainly because the worn surfaces that we have got used to are replaced by a negligible amount of sound.

If I may suggest, this is emphatically not a record to be played through, not even one whole side. Kreisler never played more than three or four of these pieces at the end of a recital—and that is the way to enjoy them. T.H.

TCHAIKOVSKY. *Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23.* *Vladimir Horowitz* (piano), *N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra* conducted by *Arturo Toscanini*. H.M.V. CSLP505 (12 in., 42s. 6d.). Recorded May 6th, 1941.

This is a reissue from the old 78's of the famous performance in which, if I may say so without disrespect, Horowitz and Tosca-

nini combined to give the old favourite the works. Horowitz, I suppose, can play faster than anybody else—and does: Toscanini aids and abets him apparently whole-heartedly. (What one would like, far more, is a recording of the conversation of the two of them at an early piano rehearsal, for one cannot imagine that the accident of their being brought together by Horowitz marrying Toscanini's daughter by any means brought them together in their musical views).

The recording was not received with enthusiasm in this country, even in 1941. The balance is all right, only the clarinet tending to get lost, and the new surface is really very good. But the piano tone is terribly shallow and the orchestra shrills in your ears when it is playing at all loudly. I found it best to turn my equipment into the semblance of as old a machine as possible: to cut out the tweeter altogether, to cut the treble like anything, and to use maximum filter. Then you must forget quality of sound and shift your interest to what Horowitz and Toscanini are up to.

Allegro, Tchaikovsky headed his first movement but could then hardly have qualified it more: *non troppo* and, as if that were not enough, *e molto maestoso*. Toscanini sets off at a speed that is certainly both exciting and arresting: whether it is what Tchaikovsky wanted is much open to doubt. But there it is: a gingered-up performance of the first movement, yet with breathtaking playing from the soloist, both in such things as cascading octaves and in extreme delicacy. And in the slow movement, what an astonishing performance of the middle, scherzo-like, section.

The enormous interest of this performance outweighs whatever criticism one may have of the interpretation and it is right that it should be available. Every Public Library, to begin with, should preserve a copy—and every would-be solo pianist! T.H.

McCORMACK SONG RECITAL. I

I hear you calling me (Marshall); *Jeanie with the light brown hair* (Foster); *Believe me if all those endearing young charms* (Moore, arr. Schneider); *Love's old sweet song* (Molloy); *Bless this house* (Brahe) with piano accompaniment by *Edwin Schneider*. *I'll walk beside you* (Murray) with piano accompaniment by *Gerald Moore*. *A pair of blue eyes* (Kernell); *The Rose of Tralee* (Glover) with Orchestra. *John McCormack* (tenor). H.M.V. BLP1084 (10 in., 29s. 6d.).

The late Count John McCormack's lovely voice is, they tell me, an acquired taste. Perhaps. Like china tea to those who use Ceylon and artificial milk, it takes getting used to. But at least, this silvery tenor, with its inimitable Irish vowels and nasal timbre, was a taste acquired by a good many millions: and I don't think there will be many buyers to regret this excellent transfer of some of his most popular ballads, for the voice comes through most beautifully. If only to hear the last repetition of "I hear you calling me", with a pianissimo

head note like an angel's kiss, I'd spend my last penny on this collection.

Pedants will tell you some of the songs (three of them) are *infra dig.* I don't know how the selection was made: possibly on the basis of the titles which sold most copies (in which case I'd point out that tastes change and that "A Pair of Blue Eyes" has a faded and ephemeral musical comedy feel about it which is quite a different thing from the lasting charm of much else McCormack sang).

I plead for inclusion in the next McCormack issue of "O sleep" (from *Semele*) and "Ah moon of my delight" from Liza Lehmann's *Persian Garden*, both of them containing sheer artistry in singing which must be heard to be believed. Not to mention "Bird songs at eventide". On this present record there is actually one unsuccessful nuance—at the end of the "Rose of Tralee" the great singer does not return to his full voice after a *mesa di voce* with the absolute assurance one expects. But how touching is the fervent climax of "Bless this house" where the "gentle strength" of the voice is very striking; and how perfect, in its lightness, lilt and lack of sentimentality is the last verse and chorus of "Love's Old Sweet Song". But why gild the lily? Nothing I say escapes being an impertinence: *ecco un artista*, as Tosca observes. Perfection turns up again and again on this charming record. P.H.-W.

CLASSICAL REISSUES

Mercury discs are now being issued in this country with the legend "A product of the Pye group of companies" on each sleeve. Six have come my way this month which were originally issued by the previous distributors of the Mercury label in this country. All date from between the summer of 1954 and the summer of 1955 and I take it that all were recorded with Mercury's one-microphone technique. In every case the orchestral sound is quite remarkably vivid; though perhaps a little strident at times. Paul Paray's Beethoven No. 7 may not tempt many (MRL2008), but a disc of French music with the same orchestra, the Detroit Symphony, is attractive: Roussel's *Le Festin d'Araignée*, Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (with a Sicilienne that is much too slow) and Dukas's *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, the latter also slow, but, I think authentically so. There is plenty of humour in the performance; I remember Paray, a born comedian, dancing jauntily on the rostrum, to get what he wanted from some rather apathetic English bassoonists at those moments when the broom begins to move (MRL2500). Four discs by the Minneapolis Orchestra conducted by Dorati include Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* (MRL2503) and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (MRL2006) in versions that have still to be bettered as pure orchestral sound, though the performances themselves are not perhaps quite the best. Respighi's *Fountains and Pine Trees*, both of Rome (MRL2007), do not wear well as far as my ears are concerned, nor does Morton Gould's *Spirituals for String Choir and*

Orchestra (MRL2506), a work I once remember enjoying; but on the back the clever-as-paint dish-up by Russell Bennett for enormous orchestra of tunes from *Porgy and Bess* makes for enjoyable listening if you are in glossy mood. Much as I admire the skill with which this "symphonic picture" has been put together, I am not sure that these basically simple tunes can stand up to this degree of elaboration. But there are some gorgeous effects.

Philips also have their *Porgy and Bess* contribution, eight numbers, including all your favourites, from the excellent recording of the whole opera that came out last November (SBR6204), and the addition of the voices is worth all the glossy orchestrations in the world. This music is quite beautifully sung, the name parts by Lawrence Winters and Camilla Williams, with a superb Sporting Life by Avon Long, and the conductor is Lehman Engel. Gershwin's opera is such a mixture of fascinating miniatures and rather unhappy linking and rhapsodical passages that, quite apart from the financial advantage, there is something to be said for extracts rather than the whole opera. Naturally the extracts, being taken from the complete tape, sometimes end abruptly, but this is a most exciting disc; in fact I could not get my family to stop playing it.

The Vienna Symphony Orchestra's

version of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* on a 45, conducted by Moralt (ABE10010) lacks the intimate quality this music needs, being rather boomily recorded, but two Strauss waltzes, from the same orchestra, *The Kiss* conducted by Salmhofer, and *Voices of Spring* conducted by Moralt are quite attractive (NBE11034); both are taken from discs of Strauss waltzes issued in 1954 under the aegis of the Strauss society. But personally I much preferred Malcolm Arnold's exuberant *Beckus the Dandyprat* (conducted by the composer) and *Tam o' Shanter* (conducted by Hollingsworth), both on yet another 45 (NBE11038). The former does not quite seem to knit together as a piece of music, but this may be because it is not so well played as *Tam o' Shanter*, which comes off like one o'clock, and if it drives you to re-read Burns' poem that will do you good too.

Finally there is a Decca reissue of two suites from ballets by Delibes, *Sylvia* and *Coppélia*, formerly on two ten-inch discs but now available on a single twelve-inch (LXT5217). These date from 1951 but they still sound astonishingly brilliant. Alas, Roger Désormière who made these recordings with the Conservatoire orchestra, has now retired. To music of this sort he brought a sparkle that it rarely receives, and he made one realise what a very good composer Delibes was. R.F.

NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE

By W. A. CHISLETT

H.M.V. CLP1076 is remarkable from the technical point of view. I venture to predict that it will establish itself both as a "test" record and one frequently chosen to demonstrate the quality of reproducing equipment. I have tried it on three different outfits. It is extremely good on all and the sound is positively thrilling on the best of them. Whether you like it or not from other points of view depends chiefly on your reactions to military band music. The band is that of the *Irish Guards* under Captain C. H. Jaeger and there are fourteen separately banded items starting with the Regimental Quick and Slow Marches. The words of command which introduce these are a mistake in my view but this is a purely personal reaction. Many of the items might almost have been specially chosen to demonstrate the fine quality of both band and recording. Included are traditional tunes like *Shepherd's Hey* and the *Irish Washerwoman*, Louis Ganne's famous *Marche Lorraine*, Strauss's *Perpetuum Mobile*, Jigger's *Corn* by Captain Jaeger himself and a quantity of light and tuneful music in excellent arrangements and among which I was tickled to recognise, despite its modern dress, in *La Sorrellia*, a tune beloved of trick cyclists and others in the music halls of my youth. One point about the recording that particularly impresses me is that without being fully stereosonic it does give a decided impression of depth from back to front. An instrument that ought to be prominent is prominent but without any feeling that it has been brought nearer to the mike. Many examples could be quoted but suffice to say that when the bass drum is given a mighty thump it sounds full size (but not oversize) but also sounds to be coming

from the rear of the band. And another fine feature is the almost uncannily faithful reproduction of distinctive timbres. Had the recording been done in a building with a slightly shorter reverberation period it would, I think, have been even better. But it is a truly outstanding record anyway.

Very good recording also distinguishes "Operatic Intermezzi" played in part by the *Bamberg Symphony Orchestra* and in part by the *Württembergisches Staatsorchester, Stuttgart* under Ferdinand Leitner in both cases (D.G.G. DGG17001). This is a happy mixture of the very familiar, the lesser known and (in England) the almost completely unknown. *Cav.* and *Pag.* had to be included I suppose and excerpts from *Mignon* and *The Jewels of the Madonna* are also to be expected but the lively *Danna Diana* overture is a very pleasant inclusion, the *Thunderstorm* from Rossini's *Barber of Seville* I do not ever remember to have heard divorced from the opera before, and the interlude from Schmidt's *Notre Dame* is quite new to me. The playing is excellent with a fine broad string tone which is bright without being steely.

Of the three available recordings of the two *Peer Gynt* Suites my preference has been for that by Otterloo and the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra (Philips ABR4027) and it still remains my first choice. The *London Symphony Orchestra* under George Weldon are very well recorded on Col. 33S1091 but the Dutch strings are more suave when this quality is called for and the affection lavished on the music by Otterloo results in greater sensitivity of phrasing. I also prefer Solog's *Song* to be sung as it is in the Philips disc.

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 "Gianni Schicchi": O mio babbino caro

SEL1546

HERBERT VON KARAJAN

conducting the PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
 "Intermezzi":
 "Les Contes d'Hoffmann"—Offenbach: Barcarolle, Act 2;
 "Carmen"—Bizet: Entr'acte, Act 4;
 "Thaïs"—Massenet: Meditation, Act 2
 (Solo Violin: Manoug Parikian)

SEL1547

WALTER GIESEKING

"Debussy": Arabesque No. 1 in E; Arabesque No. 2 in G;
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SEL1548

CLANCY HAYES SINGS

with LU WATTERS AND HIS JAZZ BAND
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Sir Thomas Beecham proved years ago... that his talents were singularly apt for the bubbling, ingenuous refreshment of the "Little" C major Symphony, and it is a happy debut he makes in reaffirming the aptitude... The woodwinds, so prominent in this symphony, are delineated with the same delicacy the conductor brings to Mozart, and not with any sacrifice of vigour... the opinion here is that this edition will maintain leadership for years... In full probability no living music lovers will ever hear any of these three works played better."

C. G. BURKE IN "HIGH FIDELITY"



PHOTO : DOUGLAS GLASS

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conducting the

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

SCHUBERT

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GRIEG

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Old Norwegian Romance with Variations

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(The Frail One)

with

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WILLIAM DICKIE, SILVIO MAIONICA,
GIUSEPPE ZAMPIERI, NICOLA ZACCARIA,
FRANCO RICCIARDI, VITTORIO TATOZZI,
CARLO FORTI

and the

ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS OF LA SCALA, MILAN

(Chorus Master: Norberto Mola)

conducted by

TULLIO SERAFIN

(Recorded in co-operation with "E.A. Teatro alla Scala", Milan)

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Albert and the headman;
Jubilee Sovereign; Marksman Sam;
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Sam drummed out 33S1093

Carroll Gibbons

and his Boy Friends

"THE TOUCH OF PIANO MAGIC"
On the air;
I'm getting sentimental over you;
The birth of the blues;
Time on my hands;
Smoke gets in your eyes;
She's my lovely;
Moonlight and roses;
The way you look tonight;
Chlce; Solitude;
Let's fall in love 33S1094

Eddie Calvert

with the Golden Triolet (No. 3)

Yesterdays; Confessin';
I'm getting sentimental over you;
Maybe; As time goes by;
You go to my head; Imagination;
Mean to me; Poor Butterfly;
In the still of the night 33S1095

COLUMBIA

33 $\frac{1}{2}$ R.P.M. LONG PLAYING RECORDS

Philip Green

and his Orchestra

"MOMENTS IN MAYFAIR":
These foolish things;
Someday I'll find you;
Room five hundred and four;
She's my lovely;
Midnight in Mayfair;
Love is the sweetest thing;
London fantasia;
A nightingale sang in Berkeley
Square; We'll gather lilacs;
Limehouse blues 33S1096

Victor Silvester

The Ballroom Orchestra • The Silver Strings • The Mambo Rhythm

DANCING TO VICTOR SILVESTER (NO. 7)
The way you look tonight (QS);
Stars over Rio (Rumba);
So blue (W); You'll never
know (SF); Haiti (Samba);
September in the Rain (QS);
Estoril (Tango);
Anniversary Waltz;
Stars fell on Alabama (SF);
Puerto Rico (Mambo) 33S1093



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I first heard the **Don Cossack Choir** under the diminutive but vital **Serge Jaroff** more years ago than I like to remember and here they are again on D.G.G. DG17067. The choir first appeared in Vienna in 1923 after which followed triumphant tours of the world. They are now as good as ever they were. Some of the old hands, notably that remarkable bass Popovkin, have died and some have retired but several of the original members still remain and the newcomers have been well drilled in the old traditions. The title is *Songs of Old Russia*.

Seven Popular Dances of Russia is the title of the first record to be issued in England by the **Moscow State Folk Dance Society** (Philips ABR6035). This is of course the organisation founded by Igor Moiseyev in 1937 and which recently paid a visit to London. Here are seven dances of various parts of the U.S.S.R. played by the Society's orchestra under **Samson Galperin**. And a very good orchestra it is of more or less conventional composition with the addition of instruments to give local colour as necessary. One had got rather accustomed to regarding most of the folk music of Russia as sad or even tragic but most of these tunes are lively and joyous and the two attributed to Moldavia are as gipsy-like and rhapsodical as one would expect.

I approached *Alibi for Drums* with considerable relish (Oriole MG10011) but I was disappointed. The record sleeve announces **Thurston Knudson** as the "foremost exponent of native drums" but I would back some of the drummers in Decca's African series against him any time. One side contains four tracks containing *The Vamp*, the dreadful parody of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Hymn to the Sun* which was popular for a time 20 years ago, *Speak Low* and *Yank in Karachi* in which Mr. Knudson is merely the drummer in a conventional dance band. The reverse is labelled *Authentic Native Drum Series* but it smells strongly of Tin Pan Alley. Incidentally, could not the sleeve have been written in English instead of using such words and spelling as "trumpetist" and "fugatto"?

On the contrary a couple of H.M.V. 78s played by the **Country Dance Band** and recorded under the auspices of the English Folk Dance and Song Society are delightful—and authentic. They are also very well recorded. The titles are *Virginia Reel* and *Cumberland Reel* and *Green Mountain Volunteer* (B10955) and *Nottingham Swing* and *Double Lead Through* (B10956).

Equally authentic sounding and very charming is my solitary 45 on which **Mary O'Hara** sings *The Spanish Lady*, *Eileen Aroon*, *Cool an Phibrough* and *Spinning Wheel*. The first three are arrangements of traditional songs and the last is by J. F. Waller. Miss O'Hara accompanies herself on the harp. A delightful disc (Beltona IEP41).

On August 27th Eric Coates, than whom no living composer has written more or better light music, attained his 70th birthday and in celebration Columbia has issued a long-playing anthology called "Favourite Music of Eric Coates" played by the **London Symphony Orchestra** under **Charles Mackerras** and which covers almost the entire length of his composing career. I am particularly glad that this includes *The Three Bears*, one of his early but still one of his most entertaining pieces. The other titles are *Merrymakers Overture*, *At the Dance*—from "Summer Days", *Man from the Sea*—from "Four Men", *Oxford Street*—from "London Again", *By the Sleepy Lagoon* and *Queen Elizabeth March*—from "Three Elizabeths" (33S1192). The performance is brilliant and I like the recording, which is at a high volume level, particularly for the keen brightness of the strings with no suspicion of wiriness. Con-

gratulations to Mr. Coates and long may he continue to enliven our lighter moments.

POSTSCRIPT.—Decca has quickly followed its recent record by the **Massed Brass Bands of Foden's Motor Works, Fairey Aviation and Morris Motors** conducted by **Harry Mortimer** with *Men of Brass, Volume 2*, and I like this even better than the earlier issue if only because of the choice of music which is the

Introduction to Act 3 of *Lohengrin*, the amusing *Whistler and his dog*, the first record of which I had was played by the composer's own band, *Medallion March*, and Tchaikovsky's 1812 *Overture*. The last makes one of the grandest noises I have ever heard on a disc—Tchaikovsky would have been delighted with it, I am sure. The recording was done at the Belle Vue Gardens, Manchester (LF1263).

MISCELLANEOUS AND DANCE By "HARLEQUIN"

45 r.p.m. numbers are given where applicable for E.M.I. Group titles, whilst an asterisk indicates availability at 45 r.p.m. on the Decca Group labels. 45 r.p.m. numbers for the latter Group and Capitol are the same as the 78 r.p.m. numbers with the addition of the prefix "45".

A light month in this department, though not, I gather, elsewhere. Let us therefore reflect for a moment on the phenomenal success of **Victor Borge** (pronounced Borgah), whose first record appears from Philips (BBR8095). Mr. Borge is a Dane and a conservatory-trained pianist, but has developed into a kind of pianistic Anna Russell, though less subtle, less musical, more obvious and therefore much more popular. It is the difference between the connoisseur and the popular entertainer. For Mr. Borge it all began apparently when one evening he was soloist in Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto with the Copenhagen Philharmonic. The audience laughed at his eloquent eyebrows, the conductor lost his nerve and got ahead of the soloist, so that come the cadenza Mr. Borge rose from his seat, walked over to the rostrum, turned the score back three pages and resumed his seat, giving the audience an almighty wink as he continued to play. Enemy occupation, the flight to the United States, the search for work in Hollywood, the break in a Crosby radio show and stardom.

To-day Mr. Borge is a much sought artist, but what happened when he came to England? Did he appear at the Albert Hall, at Belle Vue, at the Palladium? Of course not; he appeared for the B.B.C. on television. A wonderful scoop and a mighty big nail in the coffin of the English theatre. That is worth thinking about and the harder you think the more you will be driven back to pounds, shillings and pence. Year by year you pay your licence fee into the great maw of the broadcasting authority, but you may have to think even harder to remember when you last passed half a crown across the box-office grille. So it comes about that an original artist like Mr. Borge makes a solitary appearance on T.V. instead of touring the country for all to see, while our remaining theatres wonder if they can afford to pay out next week's nudes, cheap as they are. As I write we are mourning Violet Lorraine, a star if ever there was one, but how would such a great and generous artist fare on our little screens? An artist needs an audience, and not just the something-for-nothing studio rabble. Incidentally on the night of Miss Lorraine's death old collectors were able to play not only her electric medley, but the original "Bing Boys" records of her with George Robey and Alfred Lester and even Nat Ayer playing and singing his own songs on an electric Columbia. Now they are all dead, and their records, always rare and few, will be the more treasured.

Curiously enough Mr. Borge has revived a very old-fashioned type of performance, that of the entertainer "at the piano". Not only has he mastered the English language, but it is

remarkable that as he presumably learnt it in America his style is quiet and almost apologetic—in fact, very English. It is the quiet aside, the gag that is almost thrown away, that gets the big laugh. We must be honest and admit that this is frankly a visual act, but Philips have been extremely clever in distilling the material for this disc, which is called "Comedy in Music—Volume 1", and that is encouraging. In truth the patter is much more entertaining than the playing, for musically this kind of thing has been far better done, notably in the wonderful and probably unobtainable record of Fray and Braggiotti on Brunswick, in which the players give themselves sufficient time to construct whole movements in the style of different composers, while as long ago as "The Co-optimists" Wolsey Charles used to divert us with his *Three Blind Mice* variations (recorded on Decca). Here Mr. Borge uses *Happy Birthday*, but whereas Fray and Braggiotti played original variations, Mr. Borge does it the easy way by merely fooling around with popular works by the composers concerned, and almost interpolating the tune. Still if you laugh at jokes like "Tchaikovsky—see under 'T'—ah, yes, Lipton" you will enjoy the disc. For myself I would have travelled a long way to see this artist had I been given the chance, and though a funny LP has got to stay funny for a long time to justify the cost I think you will enjoy playing this to friends, if they have not seen him on T.V. I look forward to Volume 2. As with Miss Russell, this is a live recording, and necessarily so.

Do you recall an old nursery rhyme (it must be) called *I know an old lady*? You do? Then, forget it for a moment and think instead of the tune of *The Stars and Stripes for Ever*. Got it? Now sing the following words: "Oh be kind to our web-footed friends, for that duck must be somebody's mother, they live in the swamps and the fens, or wherever it is damp, you may think it's the end of my song, well it is". To those readers who have never sung that nonsense to that tune I can only say that its intrusion here is not simply due to the fact that this is being written on August Bank Holiday! I am reminded of them by **Bill Hayes'** abrupt ending to his version of *I know an old lady* on London HLA8300*. He does this superbly. It is a "house that Jack built" number and recommended to all ages. On the back you will see *Das ist Musik*, which turns out to be Max Bygraves' *Crazy Music*. That is just a warning, and need not detract from the simple enjoyment afforded by the record. It is difficult to know what to say about **Stan Freberg**, because to see the point you have got to know about rock 'n' roll and other fads, which must be anathema to readers of THE GRAMOPHONE even if they have ever heard of it! Anyway on Capitol CL14608* Mr. Freberg's *Hearbreak Hotel* takes the whole moronic business for a ride, echo effects and all, coupled with similar treatment for *Rock Island Line*, a number which I confess to enjoying the other month!

With so many feet of Mood Music coming to

us from the United States it is good to raise a cheer for the Canadian **Robert Farnon**, whose *genre* pieces have been the staple fare of so many broadcast light orchestras since the war. How many times have we run up the road, toast and marmalade in hand, to catch the bus to work with the breakfast strains of *Jumping Bean* or *The Peanut Polka* in our head and speeding our step? Both these tunes, together with *Portrait of a Flirt* and many others, are collected on Decca LK4140 played by the composer. Mr Farnon is a composer of distinction, and must have made almost enough from these pieces to get down to another symphony if he feels so disposed. It is worth noticing again that the best of light music almost always emanates from those who have graduated the hard way. Anyway we in this country are glad to have had Mr. Farnon with us since the war, and this assembly of his light music will earn its just reward. Welcome, too, to **Kenny Baker**, whose "Let's settle for music" is a Tuesday date on the radio for many people. Over the years he has maintained a semblance of sanity in dance music, but he is a rare visitor on disc. He should record a library of styles, for no one could do it better. *Baker's Boogie* and Ellington's *Blues I Love to Sing* on Nixa N15059 may be no great shakes except as an augury.

Readers cannot accuse me of being addicted to harmony singing in general and sister acts in particular. Nevertheless a 12 inch LP by **The McGuire Sisters** is worth looking at, unless you cannot stand anything of the sort. Month by month these girls come to me, are dutifully played and never so much as rate a mention in the column. The first thing that strikes you about "Do you remember when?" on Vogue LVA9024 is that the performance has been well thought out. The opening number gives the key to the whole thing. These are old songs—late twenty-ish mostly. I know nothing sounds more nightmarish on paper than the prospect of an hour of girl singing, but these girls are so well drilled and have taken the trouble (a) to vary the act and (b) to avoid screaming that the result is sufficiently interesting "to want to hear the next number", a rare achievement in pop LPs. Try *Blue Skies*—the very last number—and you may feel that if we have got to have these numbers sung at all, then here at least is an original conception and one that is in essence vocal rather than instrumental.

There is little else. **Les Baxter's Melodia Loga**, sub-titled "The drive-you-crazy song", is just a jolly tune, coupled with a pretentious *Concerto and Theme from "Foreign Intrigue"* with chorus (Capitol CL14603*). You can have the intrigue also from **June Christy** on CL14604*. A new **Les Paul and Mary Ford** is *Cimarron* and *San Antonio Rose* on CL14593*. *Lucky Pierre* is likely to catch on, and a good record of it is CL14602* with **Joe Carr** at the piano and some appropriate whistling. The reverse—*Mr. and Mrs. Cogynut*—is merely childish. **Winifred Atwell** is beginning to wear a bit thin, but for those who are content with the gimmick there is her *Left Bank* and *Rampart Street Rock* on Decca F10762*. Shall we stick "rock" on the end of *The Lily of Laguna* and be done with it? There is a good record from **George Melly** with **Mick Mulligan's Band** on F10763*—*I'm a Ding Dong Daddy and Kingdom Coming*. For simple tastes there is **Janie Marden** in *Magic Melody* and *Allegheny Moon* on F10765*.

Billy Cotton cannot resist aeroplane noises for his record of the march *Reach for the Sky*, but his huge public will expect this and the playing is worthy. An efficient performance (Decca F10767*). A very neat performance of *The Bandit* comes from **Don Carlos** on H.M.V. 7MC48. Here are three EPs. "Moonlight Fiesta with Winifred Atwell" is a faintly Latin-American collection with the odd addition of a tame 18th Variation (Paganini-

Rachmaninov) on Philips BBE12066. **Frank Sinatra** collects some old songs—*Love, If's only a Paper Moon, My Blue Heaven* and *It all depends on You* on BBE12058. O.K. if you forget Jack Smith or Miss Fields in the third of these! Two years ago in the cold amphitheatre at the Battersea Pleasure Gardens amid the cold summer winds **Toralf Tollefsen**, the world's greatest accordion player, entertained a few stalwarts huddled together for warmth. The squeeze box is not everybody's cup of tea (it doesn't happen to be mine), but this man is a virtuoso, as you can hear on Columbia SEG14.

THE MONTH'S CHOICE

Victor Borge	Philips BBR8095
Bill Hayes	London HLA8300
Robert Farnon	Decca LK4140
George Melly	Decca F10763
Mantovani	Decca LF1259
Toralf Tollefsen	Columbia SEG14

On LP there is **Bill McGuffie** re-collecting some previously recorded pieces, including his delightful *La Mer* (Philips BBR8087), **Doris Day** doing ditto on BBR8094 and **Paul Weston** in background music from twelve films (non-musicals) in "Love Music from Hollywood" on BBL7085, very well played and recorded and extremely soporific! **Carreta** and his Orchestra strikes me as O.K. for sound in "Musical Moods", all his own work, on Vogue LVA9029. **Johanny Costa** plays the piano nicely on LVA9027 and surprisingly in *Holiday for Strings*, and **Mel Torme** will doubtless delight those who like him on London LTZN15009, which carries the magical symbol "Hi-Fi" after the number—what do they think all the other records are? On the cover of this record Mr. Torme's face is outlined in photographs of motor cars—we bring you something new each month. "The Waltzes of Irving Berlin" by **Mantovani** is something we must have been hearing in one form or another for the past few years, but the present 10 inch LP from Decca (LF1259) is a convenient

format, and these well loved melodies could not be more agreeably turned. Do you buy records by **Van Lynn**? If so, why? I do not mean this unkindly, for his new record (Brins, LAT8125) is first class. Here is a whole string of tunes, which few people can ever have heard of, immaculately played and recorded, but of surely little significance to anyone. Or is it true that in these days of universal radio at the turn of a switch people do actually pay two pounds for background music against which to read, knit, wash-up, or even write reviews?

It was **The Ray Charles Chorus** who contributed the best recorded version of "The Pajama Game", and now on London HAF2010 they enjoy a field day called "Faraway Places". Excellent, if a trifle dull. Pianos in double harness used to be very much in vogue before the war (the Ragamuffins and all that), but it is seldom they appear to-day. Here, then, for old times' sake, but also for their own, are **The Keyboard Kings** in *Rainbow Rag* on Oriole CB1331, and a mark for **Maxine Daniels** for an original song called *In the old French quarter of New Orleans* on CB1332, even if we have to take it away for the reverse! *The President on the Dollar* is George Washington and a patriotic song played and sung by **Mitch Miller** on Philips PB611, and **Les Elgart**, who so recently sent us a wonderful LP of dance music, relaxes with *The Street Musician* on PB613, but this is not really what we want from Mr. Elgart on the strength of that first record. *Coal Dust on the Fiddle* is another original song—the local hop in the mining area—put over by **Somebith' Smith** and the **Redheads** on PB609, and there is another record from **Laurie Johnson** on H.M.V. JO458. There is good work here, but the recording is shattering. *Buttercup* is less hard on the neighbours than *Lullaby of the Leaves*. This band has ideas, but as at present presented, they go for nothing. Lastly what price **Renato Carosone e il Suo Quartetto** in *Lots-a Piano* (Pianofortissimo) and *Infatuation* (Scapricciatello) on Parlo. DPP39? Well, what price? Shall we say 5s. 7d. and leave it at that, for it is with this that I must leave you till October.

CONTINENTAL RECORDS

By LILIAN DUFF

With one exception all the records submitted for review this month are Italian—in fact, all songs heard at this year's San Remo festival. Last month I discussed a smaller selection, including prize-winners. Now, on one long-player (Durium TLU97001) you may hear all twenty entries sung by **Rino Salviati, Nella Colombo, Aurelio Fierro, Bruno Rossettani** and **Flo Sandon's**—who chooses to spell her name with a possessive "s", don't ask me why.

On second hearing I like the winner of the first prize, *Aprite le Finestre*, a little better than I did, but it's still the sort of thing you feel you've heard a dozen times before, and probably have. Bruno Rossettani has, I think, the best selection, although not one of them is an official prize-winner. I particularly liked *Musetto*, by one of my favourite Italian composer-singers, Domenico Modugno. Rhythm and phrasing are fresh where most of the others are Italian Tin Pan Alley. In company with Nella Colombo Rossettani also sings a number I recommended last month, *Lucia e Tobia*.

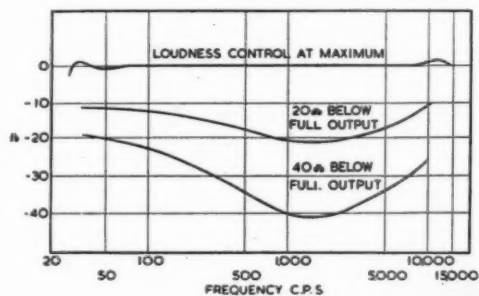
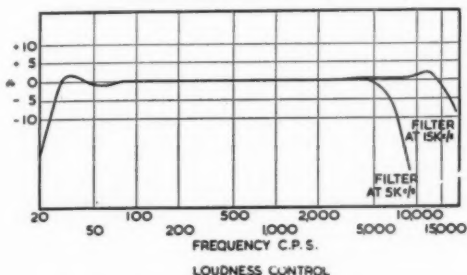
Variety of song and voice don't save this vocal Marathon from dull patches. Two of the songs are heard to better advantage on Col. DCQ89. The **Marisa Fiordaliso/Enz. Amadori** version of *Lucia e Tobia* has a lighter

comedy touch—you may remember Miss Fiordaliso's lively *Papaveri e Papere*—and she is also heard to advantage in a charming waltz, *La Vita e un Paradiso di Bugie*. There is another version of this song, the third prize-winner at San Remo, sung by **Gioglio Consolini** (Parlo. DPQ83). Those who enjoy this artist's work will also like *Anima Gemella* on the other side. Two more San Remo entries are *Il Bosco Innamorato* and *Nota per Nota* (H.M.V. JOM86), both sung by **Luciano Virgili**. His style is sometimes a little overpowering in such trifles, but at least he has a voice.

The one record not connected with the festival is "Café Continental" (Vanguard PPT12013). Eight numbers, in English, French, German and Italian, are sung by **Liane**, described on the sleeve as "a sultry-voiced damsel whose vocal magic, with the accompaniment of the (Vienna) Bohème Bar Trio, has been faithfully captured for your enchantment". Liane is an accomplished artist, even though comparisons with Hildegard, Edith Piaf, Jacqueline François and Marlene Dietrich all at once may be putting it a bit high. I can only say that I should have enjoyed her more if her material had been fresher. The titles, *Papaveri e Papere, Wunderbar, L'Amé de Poète* and *Ni toi, ni moi*, speak for themselves.

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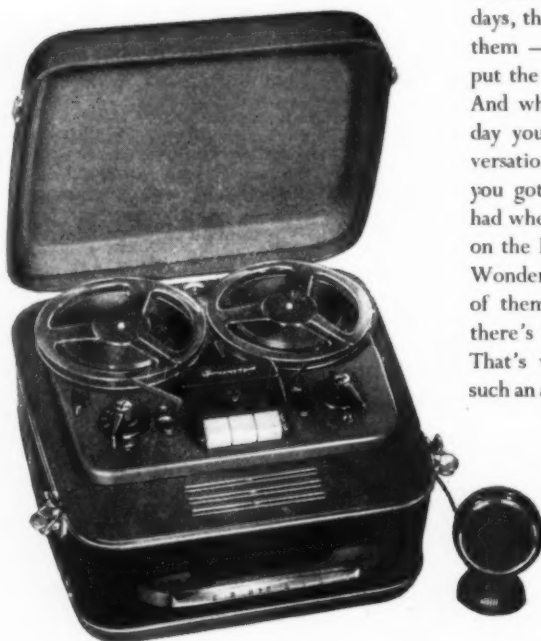
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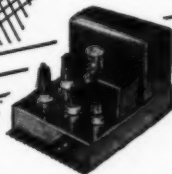
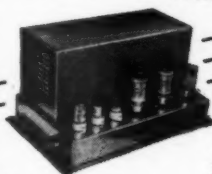
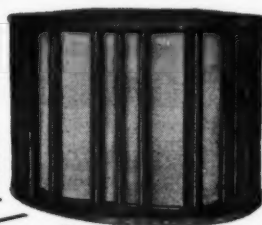
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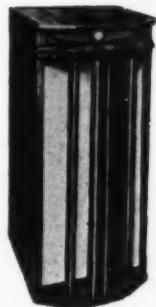


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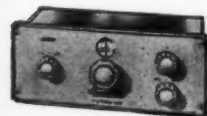
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JAZZ^AND^D SWING

Reviewed by

EDGAR JACKSON and OLIVER KING

★Chet Baker

"Chet Baker Sings"
 "But Not For Me (Gershwin) (a); Time After Time (Styne, Cahn); My Funny Valentine (Rodgers) (a); I Fall In Love Too Easily (Styne, Cahn); I Will Never Be Another You (Warren, Gordon); I Get Along Without You Very Well (Carmichael); The Thrill Is Gone (Brown, Henderson); Look For The Silver Lining (Kern). (All V by Baker) (Vogue LP LDE182—29s. 6j.d.)

(Am. Pacific Jazz)—Baker (tp); Russ Freeman (pno); Carson Smith (bass); Bob Neel (drs). Circa late 1953. U.S.A.
 (a) available also on Vogue V2377.

Pleasing choice of tunes, Russ Freeman's adept piano work and some occasional solos from Chet Baker's trumpet. But this is mainly a vocal record and unfortunately Mr. Baker must be placed among those people who only think they can sing. So let us turn to pleasanter things with:

★Chet Baker Quartet

***Rondeau (Zieff) (a); Piece Caprice (Zieff) (b); Mid Forte (Zieff) (a); Re-search (Zieff) (a); Pomp (Zieff) (b); Sad Walk (Zieff) (a); Just Duo (Zieff) (a); The Girl From Greenland (Twardzick) (b); Brash (Zieff) (b) (12 in. Feisted LP PDL85008—35s. 1j.d.)

***Summertime (Gershwin) (c); You Go To My Head (Coots) (c); Tenderly (Gross) (c); Lover Man (Ramirez) (c); There's A Small Hotel (Rodgers) (c); I'll Remember April (Ray, De Paul, Johnston) (c); These Foolish Things (Maschwitz) (c); Autumn In New York (Duke) (c) (12 in. Feisted LP PDL85013—35s. 1j.d.)

(a) (French Barclay)—Baker (tp); Dick Twardzick (pno); Jimmy Bond (bass); Peter Litmann (drs). 11/10/1955. Paris.

(b) (do.)—Same personnel. 14/10/1955. Paris.
 (c) (do.)—Baker (tp); Gerard Gustin (pno); Bond (bass); Bert Dahlender (drs). 24/10/1955. Paris

Except for one number by pianist Dick Twardzick, all the compositions on the first of these two Chet Baker LPs are by Bob Zieff, and they make ideal material for the twenty-six year old trumpet player from Oklahoma. In the lively *Mid Forte* Baker is in perky, carefree mood, in the other numbers in more wistful and serious vein, but in all of them he is at his best. Twardzick's piano fits perfectly with Baker throughout, and the two produce jazz of unusual intimacy and appeal.

During the ten days between the recording of these and the slow ballads on the second disc Twardzick died in Paris, another victim of drug-addiction. He was replaced by Gerard Gustin, who plays well but never establishes the same sympathy with Baker, and perhaps because of the tragedy Baker sounds listless on several of the tracks. *Summertime* and *Small Hotel* have solos of outstanding originality, but there is a rather depressing lack of vitality about much of the music on this recording. Incidentally, *I'll Remember April* and *Autumn In New York* seem to have got transposed on my pressing. E.J.

Count Basie and his Orchestra

***Soft Drink (Jones)

***Two For The Blues (Hefti) (Columbia-Clef LB10031—6s. 7j.d.)

(Am. Norgren)—Basie (pno); Marshall Royal, Ernie Wilkins (altos); Frank Foster, Frank Wells (saxs); Charlie Fowlkes (bar); Wendell Culley, Remaud Jones, Joe Newman (tp); Henry Coker, Bill Hughes, Ben Powell (tubs); Freddie Green (dr); Eddie Jones (bass); Gus Johnson (drs). Circa late 1954. U.S.A.

Two more by what is still the most consistently good of "regular" mainstream bands.

Soft Drink is an up tempo invigorator with alto and trumpet solos. The *Blues* side is a riff piece highlighting two of the saxophones. Had the compositions and recording been up to the standard of the playing, both would have been four-star sides. E.J.

★Max Bennett Quintet

***Rubberneck (Rosolino); Just Max (Rosolino); They Say (Heyman) (V by Helen Carr); Jeppers Creepers (Warren, Mercer); T.K. (Kahn); I'll Never Smile Again (Lowe); Do You Know Why? (Van Hensen, Barker) (V by Helen Carr); Sweet Georgia Brown (Bernie) (London LP LZ-N14029—29s. 6j.d.)

(Am. Bethlehem)—Bennett (bass); Charlie Mariano (alto); Frank Rosolino (tub); Claude Williamson (pno); Stan Levy (drs). Probably circa Spring, 1955. U.S.A.

Although not yet in his 'thirties, Iowa-born bassist Max Bennett has already had a more varied professional career than many considerably older jazz men. Among those he has worked for are Herbie Fields, Terry Gibbs, Georgie Auld, Charlie Ventura, the Sauter-Finegan partnership and Stan Kenton.

Here he fronts a group of West Coast stalwarts playing jazz that is not very different from what we have often heard them do before, but in its way is still clever and ingenious.

Charlie Mariano, Frank Rosolino and Claude Williamson play fluently on most tracks, especially Mariano, whose several solos show him in a considerably better light than did his own LP reviewed last month.

Rubberneck, *Jeppers Creepers*, *I'll Never Smile Again* and *Sweet Georgia Brown*, all up-tempo numbers, swing quite exhilaratingly. *Just Max*, as its title suggests, features the bassist-leader, so does *T.K.*, a blues composed by that great drummer, the late Tiny Kahn. The two ballads are sung very stylishly by Helen Carr, a vocalist who has worked with Charlie Barnett and Stan Kenton. E.J.

★Ruby Braff Sextet

*You Can Depend On Me (Hines); Auld Lang Syne (Trad.); I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter (Albert); Rosetta (Hines); Sometimes I'm Happy (Youmans) (London LP LZ-N14028—29s. 6j.d.)

(Am. Bethlehem)—Braff (tp); Sam Margolis (tr); Eddie Hubble (tub); Dick Katz (pno); Gene Ramey (bass); Izzy Skylar (drs). 31/12/1954. New York.

****Romance In The Dark (Green); When You Wish Upon A Star (Washington, Harline); Ghost Of A Chance (Young); Wishing (Young); Where's Freddie? (Braff); I'm In The Market For You (McCarthy, Hanley); Sweet Sue (Young); Linger Awhile (Owens, Rose) (12 in. Vanguard PPL11003—35s. 1j.d.)

(Am. Vanguard)—Braff (tp); Sam Margolis (tr, cl); Vic Dickenson (tub); Nat Pierce (pno); Walter Page (bass); Jo Jones (drs). Circa mid-1950. U.S.A.

Ruby Braff has won high praise from me in recent months, but I'm afraid my feelings about the London LP, called "Ball at Bethlehem with Braff", are almost unprintable!

Recorded at a New Year's Party given by Bethlehem Records, against a constant background of chattering, this brings out the worst aspects of informal music-making. The sleeve-note even boasts about the piano being out of tune. It all adds up to some of the sorriest playing by good musicians that I've heard for a

long time. There are a few good moments—Braff in *Sometimes I'm Happy*, Hubble's lively trombone on *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down*, Sam Margolis (an odd blend of Lester Young and Bud Freeman) in *You Can Depend On Me*. But these are but flashes in the pan. That piano never gave Dick Katz a chance.

What a difference to hear Braff and Margolis on the Vanguard, alongside Vic Dickenson, Nat Pierce, Walter Page and Jo Jones. Braff, in superb form, plays richly and lyrically on every track—notably *When You Wish Upon A Star* and *I'm In The Market For You*. Cooler than on the London LP, Margolis performs ably throughout, even taking a rather diffident clarinet solo in *When You Wish*. In *Ghost Of A Chance* and *Wishing* Vic Dickenson is at his best, a trombonist who can be both sombre and witty and who drives all the time. The rhythm team swings all the way and Nat Pierce contributes some crisp, intelligent piano work. E.J.

★Pete Brown Quintet

***That's My Weakness Now (Stept, Green) (a) It's The Talk Of The Town (Gershwin) (a) Marshall Royal and his Orchestra
 ***S Wonderful (Gershwin) (b); Funky Feelin' (Basie) (Royal) (b) (EmArcy EP ERE1504—11s. 10d.)

(a) (Am. Keynote)—Brown (alto); Joe Thomas (tp); Kenny Kersey (pno); Milton Hinton (bass); J. C. Heard (drs). 11/7/1944. New York.

(b) (Am. Emarcy)—Royal (alto); Ben Webster (tr); Bobby Tucker (pno); unidentified (bass); Jo Jones (drs). 1953. New York.

EmArcy are making some odd selections from their list. Under the title "Alto Jump", this EP brings together titles from sessions nine years apart—quite a long jump, in fact!

Pete Brown has never been my favourite alto player and these 1944 tracks show him well below his best. His tone is inclined to be weedy, his phrasing "jumpy", as always, but not very exciting. Highspot of *Talk Of The Town* is Joe Thomas's fragile yet vigorous trumpet solo; *That's My Weakness* finds him in almost equally good form. Kenneth Kersey's piano work has polish and style, and with Milt Hinton and J. C. Heard in the rhythm section this group can't help swinging.

Marshall Royal, Count Basie's lead alto and bandmaster, has seldom shown what he can do as a jazz soloist. On these tracks he blows fluently and forcefully, occasionally rasping a little, but achieving a melodic shape in his solos. Ben Webster takes a typically audacious chorus in *S Wonderful*. Jo Jones drums as brilliantly as ever. E.J.

★Buck Clayton

"Jam Session On Count Basie Favourites"

***Rock-A-Bye Basie (Young, Collins, Basie) (d); Jumpin' At The Woodside (Basie) (a1, a2); Blue And Sentimental (Basie) (d); Broadway (Woode, McRae, Bird) (c) (12 in. Philips LP BBL7087—35s. 1j.d.)

(a1) (Am. Columbia) (Intro, Ensemble, Al Cohn first and second, Green/Young, Herman sequences)—Clayton (tp); Woody Herman (cl); Lem Davis (alto); Al Cohn (tr); Newman (tp); Urbie Green, Trummy Young (tubs); Jimmy Jones (pno); Steve Jordan (dr); Walter Page (bass); Jo Jones (drs). 31/3/1954. Hollywood.

(a2) (do.) (Clayton, Fowlkes, Kyle, Newman, Clayton/Newman, Hawkins, Ensemble, Coda sequences)—Clayton (tp); Davis (alto); Coleman Hawkins (tr); Charlie Fowlkes (bar); Joe Newman (tp); U. Green, Young (tubs); Billy Kyle (pno); Freddy Greene (dr); Milton Hinton (bass); Jo Jones (drs). 13/8/1954. Hollywood.

(b) (do.)—Personnel as for (a2). Same session.
 (c) (do.)—Clayton (tp); Hawkins, Buddy Tate (tr); Ruby Braff (tp); Benny Green, Dicky Harris (tubs); Al Washlohn (pno); Greene (dr); Hinton (bass); Jones (drs). 13/3/1955. Hollywood.
 (d) (do.)—Personnel as for (c), plus Jack Ackerman (tap dancer). Same session.

This Buck Clayton Jam Session differs from its predecessors in several ways. One is the choice of tunes, all of which are associated with Count Basie's orchestra. Another is the featuring of Jack Ackerman, a tap-dancer, as a

soloist in *Rock-A-Bye Basie*. American friends tell me that the dancer George Avakian should have used "Baby" Lawrence, but Ackerman does a reasonable job, though I'm not enthusiastic about the idea of using dancers in jazz records. Lastly, and most remarkable of all *Jumpin' At The Woodside* has been concocted by splicing together tapes from two entirely separate sessions. The first took place in August, 1954, on the same day as *How Hi The Fi*, and using an identical personnel, except that Julian Dash was omitted. Sections of this have been joined with a recording made the following August. So skillfully has this been done that it is impossible to tell where the changeovers occur, even though there are three distinct joins.

Turning to the music, its quality seems more variable than in earlier Clayton Jam Sessions. Clayton and Bruff play well; so do Hawkins, Tate and some of the others. Al Waslohn, once with Jimmy Dorsey's band and a pianist new to me, does an excellent job. But there are still too many mediocre solos.

Blue And Sentimental finds Hawkins playing Herschel Evans's famous solo. Hawkins also excels on *Broadway*, swapping choruses with Buddy Tate in his most exciting manner. Perhaps the best track of all is *Broadway*—a tune rather like *Molen Swing* and recorded by Basie in 1940, although the record was never issued in this country.

Once again, a word of praise for George Avakian's listing of solo routines on the sleeve. The only omission is Buck Clayton's solo immediately after Tate's two choruses in *Broadway*. E.J.

Ken Colyer's Jazzmen

Dipper Mouth Blues (Oliver, Armstrong)
The Girls Go Crazy About The Way I Walk (Ory)

(Decca 78 F-J10755; 45 45F-J10755—5s. 7d.)
 (Decca)—Colyer (tp), Ian Wheeler (cl), Mac Duncan (tmb); John Bastable (bjo); Dick Smith (bass); Collin Bowden (dvs). 8/3/1956. London.

The spirit is willing, and the flesh is not as weak as it was. I wish the choice of numbers had been happier, and less hackneyed; I don't honestly see how anyone can improve upon Oliver's own conception of *Dipper Mouth Blues*, which was supple, inventive and exciting. This version is rather stiff, not obviously copying but not adding anything much to other existing versions, and the oft-repeated formula here does not excite. Nevertheless, as I said, there is more assurance in the manner in which both numbers are presented, less cacophony, and in the case of *The Girls*, an easier tempo. *Dipper Mouth* is much too fast.

The Colyer band is still much rougher than the Barber one; the trombone in particular is closer to the rugged pioneers from New Orleans, but the clarinet is rather squeaky, lacking the mellow warmth of Monty Sunshine. O.K.

Ken Colyer's Skiffle Group

Down Bound Train (Berry) (V)

Mule Skinner (Trad.) (V)

(Decca 78 F-J10751; 45 45F-J10751—5s. 7d.)
 (Decca)—Colyer (voc, gtr); John Bastable (bjo); Mickey Ashman (bass); Collin Bowden (dvs). 25/5/1956. London.

These are hardly jazz. The first is a moralising Western-type song that stems straight out of the parlour ballads of the 'nineties, with a piston-beat to give it life. The second is a work-song, à la Leadbelly, nearer to the jazz concept. But I wish they wouldn't call these vocal-with-strings groups "skiffle groups". They are not; a skiffle group is as much instrumental as vocal, or even more so, usually featuring harmonica, jug, kazoo, and occasionally one brass instrument. The Memphis Jug Band is a skiffle group, and so are many jug bands. I would describe the Colyer and Donegan bands as blues-and-Western groups. But what's in a name? At least it's preferable to rock 'n roll. O.K.

★Chris Connor

Blame It On My Youth (Heyman, Levant) (a); **It's All Right With Me** (Porter) (a); **Someone To Watch Over Me** (G. and I. Gershwin) (b); **Trouble Is A Man** (Wilder) (a); **All This And Heaven Too** (Van Heusen, De Lange) (a); **The Thrill Is Gone** (Brown, Henderson) (a); **All Dressed Up With A Broken Heart** (Patrick, Rees, Val) (a); **I Concentrate On You** (b); **From This Moment On** (Porter) (b); **Ridin' High** (Porter) (a)

(London LP LZ-N14036—29s. 6½d.)
 (Am. Bethlehem)—Chris Connor (voc) acc. by:
 (a)—Herbie Mann (flute); Ralph Sharon (pno); Joe Puma (gtr); Milt Hinton (bass); Osie Johnson (dvs). April, 1955. U.S.A.
 (b)—Personnel as for (a), plus J. J. Johnson, Kai Winding (tmb). April, 1955. U.S.A.

Chris Connor comes nearer on this LP than on any other record of her I have heard to justifying Stan Kenton's choice of her, in 1952, to succeed June Christy as his vocalist.

Although always a close follower of the Christy style, Miss Connor seldom showed the technique that her predecessor in the Kenton orchestra could reveal when at her best. Here her improved intonation, keener feeling for the lyrics of her songs and easier rhythm allow us to appreciate better than ever before the deep, warm quality of her attractive voice.

It is interesting to find British pianist Ralph Sharon, who left home three years ago to try his luck in the States, a member of the star line-up which accompanies Miss Connor so well in this well-varied and mostly well-chosen set of familiar ballads. E.J.

★Miles Davis Quartet

Will You Still Be Mine? (Dennis); **I See Your Face Before Me** (Dietz, Schwartz); **I Didn't** (Davis); **A Gal In Calico** (Robbin, Schwartz); **A Night In Tunisia** (Gillespie); **Green Haze** (Davis)

(12 in. Esquire LP 32-012—39s. 7½d.)
 (Am. Prestige)—Davis (tp); Red Garland (pno); Oscar Pettiford (bass); Philly Joe Jones (dvs) 6/7/1955. U.S.A.

Yet more proof of Miles Davis's "come-back" is given on this 12-inch LP. As I have mentioned before, Davis (at any rate on his recordings) fell into the doldrums around 1951, but the past couple of years have seen him returning to create some of his greatest performances. Certainly he's on top-form here, playing both muted and open in solos that are sometimes pensive, sometime exciting, but always warm and inventive.

The tunes range from a "bop classic" (*Night In Tunisia*) to a couple of Miles Davis originals (*Green Haze* and *I Didn't*), taking in some good ballads on the way. Red Garland (a lively, ingenious pianist), Oscar Pettiford and Philly Joe Jones give the excellent Miles fine support. E.J.

★Don Elliott and Rusty Dedrick

Vampire Till Ready (Dick Hyman) (c); **When Your Lover Has Gone** (Swan) (a); **Gargantuan Chant** (Hyman) (c); **Your Own Iron** (Hyman) (c); **It's Easy To Remember** (Rodgers) (b); **Dominick Seventh** (Hyman) (c)

(London LP LZ-U14034—29s. 6½d.)
 (a) (Am. Riverside)—Elliott (tp); Dick Hyman (pno); Mundell Lowe (gtr); Eddie Safranski (bass); Don Lamond (dvs).
 (b) (do.)—Lyle Dedrick (tp); same rhythm section.
 (c) (do.)—Elliott, Dedrick (tp); same rhythm section.

All 16-17/3/1955. New York.
 Although most of us know Don Elliott as a trumpet player, he does in fact play also vibes, mellophone, bongos and piano, and even sings when he feels so inclined. On this LP, however, he stays firmly behind his trumpet mouthpiece, and reveals himself to be a mellow-toned, melodic performer with a style note unlike Ruby Bruff's (note especially his solo track *When Your Lover Has Gone*). His partner here, Rusty Dedrick, is equally melodic, but in a more pointed, incisive manner, as shown particularly by his muted solo in *It's Easy To Remember*.

The two trumpet players join here with the neat, steady rhythm section to create well-

mannered yet lighthearted jazz out of arrangements by pianist Dick Hyman, who also composed the bright *Vampire Till Ready* as well as three other rather less satisfactory items. A fault of much modern jazz, especially the West Coast brand, is that it takes itself so seriously. This music manages to sound intelligent and original, yet charming and amusing as well.

The disc is also notable for Mundell Lowe's restrained guitar solos and some excellent piano work by Dick Hyman. E.J.

★Erroll Garner

Caravan (Tizol); **(There Is) No Greater Love** (Symes, Jones); **Avalon** (Jolson, Rose); **Lullaby Of Birdland** (Shearing); **Memories Of You** (Blake); **Will You Still Be Mine?** (Matt Dennis). (a)

(12 in. Philips LP BBL7078—35s. 1½d.)

"Mambo Moves Garner"

Mambo Garner (Garner); **Night And Day** (Porter); **Mambo Blues** (Garner); **That Old Black Magic** (Mercer); **Cherokee** (Noble); **Russian Lullaby** (Berlin); **Begin The Beguine** (Porter); **Mambo Nights** (Garner); **Sweet Sue, Just You** (Young). (b)

(12 in. Mercury MPL6501—35s. 1½d.)
 (a) (Am. Columbia)—Garner (pno); Wyatt Ruther (bass); Eugene "Fats" Heard (dvs). Probably circa mid-1953. U.S.A.
 (b) (Am. Mercury)—Same personnel. July, 1954 U.S.A.

If the first-mentioned doesn't make you think that Erroll Garner is the greatest jazz pianist of this decade, it is doubtful if anything ever will. It is Garner just as we have for so long known him, but doing everything he does just a little more wonderfully than he has ever done it before. The Garner inventiveness that makes every passage he plays an unpredictable but exciting experience, the Garner ability to be everything from caressingly subtle to punchingly driving, the Garner wit, and by no means least the Garner swing and beat—all are there at a standard that will surprise and thrill even those most familiar with the irrepressible Erroll. If I had six stars to award, *Lullaby Of Birdland* would get them. George Avakian's sleeve note gives an intriguing insight into the informality of a Garner recording session.

"Mambo Moves Garner" might have been more aptly entitled "Latin-American Moves Garner", for there are beguines and the like as well as mambos. But whatever one calls it, the governing factor is Garner swinging lustily and seeming almost as happy with these Latin-American tunes as he is with those which are more compromisingly jazz. E.J.

★Buddy Greco

Welcome To Mister Kelly's (Greco); **But Not For Me** (Gershwin); **They Can't Take That Away From Me** (Gershwin); **Polka Dots And Moonbeams** (Van Heusen, Burke); **They Didn't Believe Me** (Kern); **A Foggy Day** (Gershwin); **Here I Am In Love Again** (Sweeney, Charlap); **My Baby Just Cares For Me** (Donaldson); **My Ship** (Weill, I. Gershwin); **Dancing On The Ceiling** (Rodgers, Hart); **Will You Still Be Mine?** (Dennis, Adair); **One For My Baby** (Arlen, Mercer); **The Nearness Of You** (Carmichael, Washington); **Give Me The Simple Life** (Bloom, Ruby)

(12 in. Vogue-Coral LP LVA9021—37s. 6½d.)
 (Am. Decca)—Armand "Buddy" Greco (pno, voc); John Frigo (bass). 24/7/1955. Mr. Kelly's Cafe, Chicago.

Some of you may remember Buddy Greco as the pianist with Benny Goodman in the late 1940's. Here, in what, despite the helpful and competent assistance of bassist John Frigo, amounts virtually to a one-man cabaret performance of an excellent selection of songs, he shows himself to be not only a fine instrumentalist, but also a swinging singer of charm, sensitivity and wit.

His phrasing and tone are not unlike Frank Sinatra's (note, for instance, *But Not For Me* and *Dancing On The Ceiling*) yet Mr. Greco has a style of his own. Wistful and serious one moment, he can switch to exuberant scatting and improvising the next. *They Didn't Believe Me*

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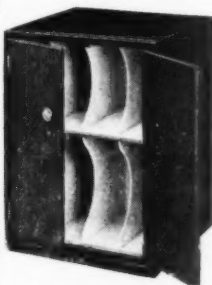
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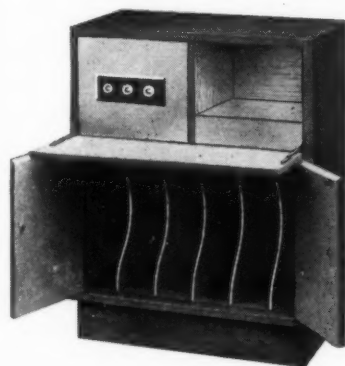


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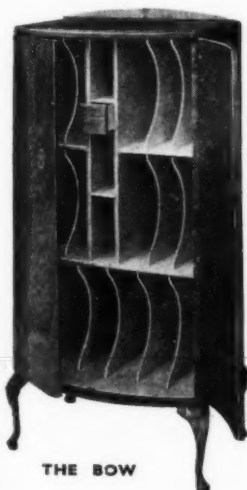
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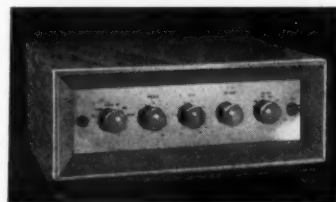
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and *They Can't Take That Away* are fine examples of this. No e the new, witty lyrics he has added to *My Baby Just Cares For Me*. E.J.

*Pat Hawes

****Rave With Dave* (Carey); *Snowy Morning Blues* (Johnson, Bradford) (a); *Sheik Of Araby* (Smith, Wheeler, Snyder) (a); *My Daddy Rocks Me* (Barbour); *Tate's Blues* (Hawes); *Jive At Five* (Edison) (Tempo LP LAP9—29s. 6j.d.)

(Vogue)—Hawes (pno, celeste); Bob Mack (gtr); Eric Starr (bass); Dave Carey (drs). 12/4/1956. London.

Note: (a) available also on Tempo A141 and 45A141

Pat Hawes, the pianist with Dave Carey's lively band, is supported here by his leader and two other colleagues. Nothing unexpected happens, but Mr. Hawes shows up as a rhythmical, capable musician in a sort of pseudo Jelly Roll Morton style, and the group as a whole, obviously encouraged along the right lines by the audience invited to the studio, swings healthily through a collection of well-chosen and well-varied tunes.

As Mr. Hawes suggests in his own sleeve note, *Tate's Blues*, an unpretentious blues composition, is the best track. E.J.

*"Introduction To Jazz"

***King Oliver's Savannah Syncopators: *Snag It* (Oliver) (1926)

***Johnny Dodds' Black Bottom Stompers: *Wild Man Blues* (Armstrong, Morton) (1927)

***Chicago Rhythm Kings: *I've Found A New Baby* (Palmer, Williams) (1928)

***New Orleans Rhythm Kings: *Tia Roof Blues* (Norks) (1934)

***Adrian Rollini's Orchestra: *Davenport Blues* (Beiderbecke) (1934)

***Jimmy Noone's New Orleans Band: *The Blues Jumped A Rabbit* (Noone) (1936)

***Bob Crosby's Bob Cats: *Five Point Blues* (Lawson) (1938)

***Louis Armstrong Orchestra: *Perdido Street Blues* (Lil Armstrong) (1940)

***Art Hodes Band: *Georgia Cake Walk* (Mills) (1942)

***Eddie Condon Orchestra: *Impromptu Ensemble No. 1* (Condon) (1944)

***Bunk Johnson New Orleans Band: *Tishomingo Blues* (S. Williams) (1945)

***George Lewis Ragtime Band: *Chimes Blues* (Oliver) (1952)

(12 in. Brunswick LP LAT8124—37s. 6j.d.)

(Am. Decca)—Personnels as on card included with record. All U.S.A.

A number of recordings (mostly American Decca) from 1926 to 1952, all well-known from the fact that they have had a previous existence on English 78 r.p.m. Brunswick, Decca or Parlophone (many, indeed, are still available in that form: see companies' catalogues) are reissued together under the title "Introduction To Jazz".

With the sleeve supplemented by a card giving the personnel, year of recording and a brief general appraisal for each performance, the collection offers about as wide an insight into jazz as probably any one recording company could provide.

The introductory note on the sleeve and all the information on the supplementary card are written by a pastor from Louisville, Kentucky, The Rev. A. L. Kershaw. To any constrained to suggest that the choice of a clergyman was the outcome of a stunt to give jazz in general and this record in particular the prestige of the sponsorship of the Church, one could fairly reply that at any rate the reverend gentleman has done his job well. His introductory note is not too sentiment ridden, his notes on the performances are not too gushing and within their limits sensibly informative. E.J.

*Jam Session

****What Is This Thing Called Love?* (Porter); *Darn That Dream* (Van Heusen, De Lange) (V by Dinah Washington); *Move* (Best); *My Funny Valentine* (Rodgers); *Don't Worry 'Bout Me* (Bloom, Koehler); *Bess, You Is My Woman* (Gershwin); *It Might As Well Be Spring* (Rodgers) (12 in. EmArcy LP EJL108—35s. 1j.d.)

(Am. EmArcy)—Herb Geller (alto); Harold Land (tr); Clifford Brown, Maynard Ferguson, Clark

Terry (tp); Junior Mace, Richie Powell (pno); Keter Betts, George Morrow (basses); Max Roach (drs). 14/10/1954. Hollywood.

Clifford Brown and Herb Geller stand out in this jam session, with Max Roach coming next for his solid drumming behind the soloists. But too much space is given to drum breaks, bass solos and all-round roof-raising. Maynard Ferguson blows with his usual phenomenal technique, but plays nothing really worth hearing.

The three trumpets are heard side by side in *Move* and *What Is This Thing Called Love?* The former is too frantic for anyone to do much worth while; Harold Land flounders sadly, but Geller manages to hold his own. *What Is This Thing?* turns out better, with good solos from Brown and Terry. Towards the end it sounds as if both pianists take solos, and then play alternate four bars.

Herb Geller first came to prominence with his playing on "Jazz Studio Two". He and Dinah Washington share *Darn That Dream*. Perhaps the best music comes in the Ballad Medley. Richie Powell plays *My Funny Valentine*, Clark Terry is in good form on *Don't Worry 'Bout Me*, Herb Geller creates beautifully poised music in *Bess*, while Clifford Brown rounds off everything with a great solo on *It Might As Well Be Spring* that makes a sad reminder of how much jazz has lost by his tragic death. E.J.

*Mundell Lowe

****Will You Still Be Mine?* (Dennis, Adair) (a); *I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan* (Schwartz) (a); *I'll Never Be The Same* (Malneck, Simeonelli); *Yes Sir, That's My Baby* (Donaldson) (b); *The Night We Called It A Day* (Dennis, Adair) (b2); *Back Revisited* (Lowe, Dick Garcia) (b); *Cheek To Cheek* (Berlin); *Far From Vanilla* (Lowe) (b) (12 in. London LP LTZ-U15020—37s. 6j.d.)

(a) (Am. Riverside)—Lowe (tr); Dick Hyman (pno, oboe); Tristram Alpert (bass); Ed Shaughnessy (drs). 27/8/1955. Reeves Sound Studios, New York.

(b) (do.)—Same personnel. (On (b2) Hyman plays celeste.) 4/10/1955. New York.

I suppose if one wanted to be pedantic one could rightly say that there are moments here when Mundell Lowe sounds just slightly corny. But in all other respects he is unassailable. His technique, tone and taste are impeccable: no type of tune stumps his ideas for an original and attractive treatment; and everything he does sounds swingingly graceful.

And as though this and the fact that he is excellently supported by bassist Tristram Alpert and drummer Ed Shaughnessy were not enough, Dick Hyman provides a new spiciness flavour by playing the organ with a bouncing lightness that I have seldom heard even Fats Waller or Count Basie achieve.

Among the best tracks are the ticklingly witty *Back Revisited* and the lovely *The Night We Called It A Day*. Another tune by Matt Dennis, one of the best of to-day's song writers, it has inspired some of Mundell Lowe's most imaginative and intriguing playing. Excellent recording throughout has helped to make this his best disc yet. E.J.

*John Mehegan

****Taking A Chance On Love* (Duke); *Sirod* (Mehegan); *Uncus* (Mehegan); *Stella By Starlight* (Young). All (b)

****Cherokee* (Noble); *The Boy Next Door* (Martin, Blane); *Blues Too Much* (Cadena); *Thou Swell* (Rodgers). All (a)

(London EZ-C19005—13s. 7j.d.)

(a) (Am. Savoy)—Mehegan (pno); Charlie Mingus (bass); Kenny Clarke (drs). Possibly circa late 1954. U.S.A.

(b) (do.)—Mehegan (pno); Chuck Wayne (gtr); Vinnie Burke (bass); Joe Morello (drs).† Probably circa same period. U.S.A.

† This personnel differs from that given on the sleeve, but may be taken as correct.

Meet John Mehegan, teacher of improvisation at Julliard University, New York, and if these

records are anything to judge by likely to become one of the outstanding jazz pianists of the decade. Like many modern pianists, he leans a little on Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell, but he is none the worse for that, and he is without doubt an instrumentalist of great technical skill. Despite his academic knowledge of improvisation his playing is not over-decorative and he does what he does with nimbleness and taste.

Both the rhythm sections provide formidable support. Joe Morello will be remembered as the drummer who helped to provide the admirable backing to Marian McPartland on 12 in. LP Capitol LCT6017, reviewed last September. E.J.

*Howard McGhee

****Get Happy* (Arlen); *Tahitian Lullaby* (McGhee); *Lover Man* (Ramirez); *Lullaby Of The Leaves* (Young); *You're Teasing Me* (McGhee); *Transpicious* (McGhee); *Riffide* (Coleman Hawkins); *Oo-Wee But I Do* (McGhee); *Don't Blame Me* (McHugh); *Tweedles* (McGhee); *I'll Remember April* (Raye, De Paul, Johnston) (12 in. London LP LTZ-N15011—37s. 6j.d.)

(Am. Bethlehem)—McGhee (tp); Sahib Shihab (alto, bar); Duke Jordan (pno); Percy Heath (bass);

Philly Joe Jones (drs). 22/10/1955. New York.

One of the pioneers of modern jazz, trumpet player Howard McGhee has rather fallen into obscurity during the past few years. This record, styled "The Return of Howard McGhee", should do something to remedy that. McGhee, who can be delicate or forceful, play tenderly or swing with abandon, performs brilliantly throughout the disc, equally at home in up-tempo numbers like *Get Happy* and *Riffide* and slow ballads such as *Lover Man* and *Don't Blame Me*.

Another "veteran" of modern jazz, Sahib Shihab, plays alto in *Transpicious* and baritone on all other tracks. Without being the most inventive of soloists, he drives ahead powerfully. Duke Jordan, still greatly underrated as a pianist, once again shows his high quality. With "Philly Joe" Jones on drums and Percy Heath on bass, the rhythm section kicks the group along exhilaratingly. E.J.

*Carmen McRae

****Easy To Love* (Porter); *If I'm Lucky* (Girard, Darwin); *Old Devil Moon* (Lane, Harburg); *Too Gently* (Girard, Matthews). (a) (London EP EZN19016—13s. 7j.d.)

****Give Me The Simple Life* (Bloom, Ruby) (e); *Sometimes I'm Happy* (Caesar, Youmans) (b); *Love Is Here To Stay* (Gershwin) (b); *Something To Live For* (Ellington, Strayhorn) (c); *I Can't Get Started* (Duke, Ira Gershwin) (b); *Yardbird Suite* (Parker) (e); *Just One Of Those Things* (Porter) (b); *This Will Make You Laugh* (Higginbotham) (b); *My One And Only Love* (Mellin, Wood) (e); *I'll Remember April* (Raye, De Paul, Johnston) (a); *Supper Time* (Berlin) (d); *You Took Advantage Of Me* (Rodgers, Hart) (e) (12 in. Brunswick LP LAT8104—37s. 6j.d.)

(Am. Decca)—Carmen McRae (voc) acc. by:

(a) (Am. Bethlehem)—Mat Mathews Quintet:

Mathews (accordion); Herbie Mann (flute);

Mundell Lowe (gtr); Wendell Marshall (bass);

Kenny Clarke (drs). 8/10/1954. U.S.A.

(b) (Am. Decca)—Dick Katz (pno); Lowe (gtr);

Marshall (bass); Clarke (drs). 14/6/1955. U.S.A.

(c) (do.)—Billy Strayhorn (pno); Marshall (bass). Same session.

(d) (do.)—McRae (pno); Lowe (gtr). Same session.

(e) (do.)—Personnel as for (a). 16/6/1955. U.S.A.

Until 1952 Carmen McRae was just a small-time entertainer, in an obscure Brooklyn cafe. But by 1954 she had achieved the distinction of being named as "Singer of the Year" in the American "Metronome" poll and voted "New Vocal Star" in the "Down Beat" critics' poll. How much of it was due to her own unaided talent and effort and how much to the help of the well-known jazz drummer, Kenny Clarke, to whom she was at the time married, I don't pretend to know. But Miss McRae deserves her success. She has everything one expects from a first-rate jazz singer—good

vocal tone, good diction, the phrasing and beat of a first-class jazz instrumentalist, and the right depth of emotion in her feeling and expression of her lyrics—and she is no mediocre pianist either.

Excellent accompaniments to which Herbie Mann's flute and Mundell Lowe's guitar add distinctive colour help to make this a delightful record.

E.J.

*Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band

***Bucket Got A Hole In It (Trad.) (a); Savoy Blues (Ory) (b); Creole Song (Ory) (V by Ory) (b); The Glory Of Love (Hill) (V by Lee Sapphires) (b); Mahogany Hall Stomp (Spencer Williams) (b); Blues For Jimmie (Ory) (b); At A Georgia Camp Meeting (Kerry Mills) (b); Go Back Where You Stayed Last Night (Waters, Easton) (V by Lee Sapphires and Joe Darenbourg) (b); Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula (Young, Goetz, Wendling) (b) (Philips LP BBR8088—29s. 6d.)

(a) (Am. Columbia)—Ory (tmb); Barney Bigard (cl); Mutt Carey (tp); Buster Wilson (pno); Bud Scott (gtr); Ed Garland (bass); Tubby Hall (drs). 21/10/1946. Hollywood.

(b) (do.)—Ory (tmb); Joe Darenbourg (cl); Teddy Buckner (tp); Lloyd Glenn (pno); Julian Davidson or Eddie Scrivaneck (gtr); Morty Cobb (bass); Hall (drs). 28/6/1950. Hollywood.

Previous issue (deleted): At A Georgia Camp Meeting and Mahogany Hall Stomp on Columbia DBS296.

If only Ory would not imitate a klaxon horn, and if Darenbourg would not slap-tongue his clarinet, these might qualify as great tracks. As it is, these faults ruin so much of each performance, for me at least. Nevertheless, what is left is some great Ory when in sober mood (as in *Glory Of Love*, *Savoy Blues* in part, and *Blues For Jimmie*), grand Buckner trumpet (*Mahogany Hall*) and some amazingly good Glenn on piano throughout, although I think that in *Georgia Camp Meeting* a piano solo is not at all necessary, and sounds most out of place. The *Creole Song* is good enough throughout, but not up to the 1944 Jazzman recording with Omer Simeon. There is some amusing vaudeville backchat on *Go Back*, and Glenn shines behind the famous *Savoy Blues* riff. But the finest track of all is the *Blues For Jimmie*, a beautiful show of bowed bass over soft, haunting minor chords from the front line, very much in the background for once. Here again, Glenn's piano, chiming wistfully against the bass, is a gem of timeless beauty. There must be many who would love this track, but who may not want the other seven; could it not be issued as a 78, coupled with, say, *Glory Of Love* or *Savoy Blues*? I was entranced by the exquisite blues feeling in this number, and played it three times over before proceeding further—a thing I've never done before.

O.K.

*Joe Puma Quintet

***Loris (Puma); A Little Rainy (Puma); What Is There To Say? (Duke); Hallelujah (Youmans); How About You? (Lane, Freed); Pumatic (Puma); Liza (Gershwin); Moon Song (Coslow) (London LP LZ-N14033—29s. 6d.)

(Am. Bethlehem)—Puma, Barry Galbraith (gtr); Don Elliott (vib); Vinnie Burke (bass); Teddy Sommer (drs). 30/11/1954. U.S.A.

If you go for neat, tasteful jazz—not swinging madly, but with plenty of melodic subtlety—you should enjoy this first album by the Joe Puma Quintet. A 29-year-old guitarist, Puma, born in the Bronx, has worked with Louis Bellson, Les Elgart and Artie Shaw, not to mention four months in Sammy ("Swing and Sway") Kaye's orchestra.

His first inspiration was the French guitarist Django Reinhardt, and something of Django's phrasing can still be heard in his playing (note, for example, his solo in *What Is There To Say?*). But modern influences—noticeably Christian, Parker and Young—have been absorbed and adapted. The result is some very attractive and melodic guitar playing, notably on the slower tracks—*Loris* (perhaps the most charming of

Puma's three unusually attractive originals) and *How About You?* in particular.

Multi-instrumentalist Don Elliott sticks to vibes all the way through. He swings gently and phrases tidily, taking his best solo on the feelingly arranged *Moon Song* and up-tempo *Liza*.

The main drawback is that, as in the case of several similar groups, a lack of tonal contrast becomes noticeable towards the end of a ten-inch LP.

E.J.

Dizzy Reece Quintet

***Basic Line (Goldberg)

***Chorus (Reece)

(Tempo 78 A140; 45 45A140—6s. 3d.)

(Vogue)—Reece (tp); Johnny Weed (pno); Dave Goldberg (gtr); Lennie Bush (bass); Phil Seamen (drs). 26/4/1956. London.

Reviewing the NEJO Modern Jazz Concert record last July, I singled out Dizzy Reece's playing (with the New Jazz Group) for special praise. The young Jamaican trumpeter pops up again on this 78 issue. Unfortunately neither side shows him at his best, but he still plays well enough to convey his genuinely individual approach. He gets adequate rhythmic support, and Dave Goldberg takes some pleasant guitar choruses.

E.J.

*Bud Shank and Bob Brookmeyer

***Low Life (Mandel) (a); When Your Lover Has Gone (Swan) (b); Out Of This World (Mercer, Arlen) (c); There's A Small Hotel (Rodgers) (d); Rustic Hop (Brookmeyer) (e); You Are Too Beautiful (Rodgers) (f); With The Wind And The Rain In Your Hair (Edwards, Lawrence) (g) (Vogue LP LDE181—29s. 6d.)

(a), (b), (c), (d) (Am. Pacific Jazz)—Shank (alto); Brookmeyer (valve-tmb); Claude Williamson (pno); Joe Mondragon (bass); Larry Bunker (drs); five-piece string section. 29/3/1954. Hollywood.

(e), (f) (do.)—Personnel as for (a), except Buddy Clark (bass) replaces Mondragon. 7/1/1951. Hollywood. Note: (b), (c), (d), (f) available also on Vogue EP EPV1133; (b) and (d) on 78 V2383 and 45 45V2383.

West Coast jazz has earned itself a reputation for iciness. Just how wrong that can be is shown by this record. Bud Shank plays fluent, exciting alto, ideas bubbling all the time. Bob Brookmeyer, as relaxed as I've ever heard him, lets effortless phrases roll from his trombone.

A Basic-like theme by Johnny Mandel, *Low Life*, kicks the record off to a thrilling start. Brookmeyer and Shank team together perfectly, underlining each other's solos. The slow ballads get ideal interpretations, with an outstanding solo by Bud Shank in *When Your Lover Has Gone*.

The one fault is that the idea of string section didn't work out. It never fuses with the soloists and the tension drops noticeably whenever it makes an appearance.

E.J.

*Lucky Thompson

***Thin Ice (Thompson) (a); Blues For Frank (Berry) (a); Minor Delight (Thompson) (a); Takin' Care O' Business (Thompson) (a); Sophisticated Lady (Ellington) (a); These Foolish Things (Marchwind) (a); When Cool Night (Thompson) (a) (London LP D93098—22s. 7½d.)

***Lullaby In Rhythm (Young) (b); I Can't Give You Anything But Love (McHugh) (b); My Funny Valentine (Rodgers) (b); But Not For Me (Gershwin) (c) (Vogue EP EPV1150—13s. 7½d.)

Tenderly (Gross) (b); Indian Summer (Herbert) (c); East Of The Sun (Bowman) (b); I Cover The Waterfront (Green) (b) (Vogue EP EPV1152—13s. 7½d.)

***A Distant Sound (Thompson) (a); Once Upon A Time (Thompson) (d); Still Waters (Thompson) (d); Brown Rose (Pochonet) (d); A Sunkissed Rose (Thompson) (d); Portrait Of Django (Sasson) (d); Quick As A Flash (Thompson) (e); The Parisian Knight (Thompson) (e); Street Scene (Thompson) (e); Angel Eyes (Thompson) (e); To You, Dear One (Thompson) (e); But Not Tonight (Thompson, Pochonet) (e) (12 in. Vogue LP LAE12022—38s. 3d.)

(e) (French Ducetet Thompson)—Thompson (tr); Emmett Berry (tp); Henri Renaud (pno); Benoit Quersin (bass); Dave Pochonet (drs). 22/2/1956. Paris.

(b) (French Vogue)—Thompson (tr) with Gerard Pochonet's Orchestra: Pochonet (drs); Michel Haussner (vib); Martial Solal (pno); "Sir John Peter" (Jean-Pierre Sasson) (gtr); Pierre Michérot (bass). 2/3/1956. Paris.

(c) (do.)—Personnel as for (b), except Quersin (bass) replaces Michelot. 14/3/1956. Paris.

(d) (do.)—Thompson (tr) with G. Pochonet's Orchestra: Pochonet (drs); Jo Hrasko (alto); Marcel Hrasko (bar); Fernand Verstraete (tp); André Paquinet (tmb); Solal (pno); "Peter" (gtr); Quersin (bass). 29/3/1956. Paris.

(e) (do.)—Personnel as for (d), minus "Peter", Christian Bellest (tp) and Charles Verstraete (tmb) replace Fernand Verstraete and Paquinet. 17/4/1956. Paris.

Lucky Thompson's tenor-playing was one of the highspots of the "Jo Jones Special" on Vanguard LP PPL11002 reviewed in July. His style coming somewhere between the coolness of Lester Young and the ripeness of Coleman Hawkins, Thompson is just about the most inventive and swinging of present-day tenormen.

Thin Ice, a solo accompanied only by bass and drums, is five-star jazz. Not far behind comes Thompson's rhapsodizing—his tone rich but firm—on *Sophisticated Lady*. This London LP also features restrained yet subtle trumpet playing by Emmett Berry, notably in his own *Blues For Frank*. Vogue EPV1150 finds Thompson backed by a different group, but playing equally fluent and original jazz. *But Not For Me* is outstanding.

The 12-inch Vogue LP drops a star, not through any falling-off on Thompson's part, but solely because the orchestrated backgrounds are rather rigid and make for duller listening. Martial Solal takes some good piano choruses; guitarist Jean-Pierre Sasson, who composed *Portrait Of Django*, joins Thompson in making it the most satisfying performance. It's a long time since I've heard better tenor playing than Thompson's work on these three records.

Sorry I can't tell you anything about EPV1152, but it hadn't arrived by time of closing for press.

E.J.

*Juan Tizol with Willie Smith

***You Can't Have Your Cake And Eat It (V by Willie Smith); Zanzibar; The Sphinx; Keblah (All Tizol) (EmArcy EP ERE1503—11s. 10d.)

(Am. EmArcy)—Tizol (valve-tmb); Smith (alto); Babe Russin (tr); Dick Cathcart (tp); Arnold Ross (pno); Irving Ashby (gtr); Ed Mihelich (bass); Nick Fatool (drs). Circa mid-1946. U.S.A.

At the time this session was recorded—ten years ago—Juan Tizol, Willie Smith, Arnold Ross and Ed Mihelich were all working in Harry James's orchestra. One of the greatest alto saxists in jazz, Willie Smith plays the best music on the date and also sings amusingly in *You Can't Have Your Cake*.

Of these four compositions by Tizol, only *Keblah* sounds at all Eastern in flavour. Tizol contributes a furry-toned trombone solo and there are good choruses by Willie Smith and Arnold Ross. On *Sphinx*, Dick Cathcart even manages to sound like Rex Stewart.

E.J.

*Joe Turner and Pete Johnson

***S. K. Blues (a); Johnson And Turner Blues (b); Watch That Jive (c). (All V by Joe Turner) (All Johnson, Turner) (EmArcy EP ERE1500—11s. 10d.)

(a) (Am. EmArcy 11501), (b) (do. 11502), (c) (do. 11503)—Johnson (pno); Don Byas (tp); Frankie Newton (tp); Leonard Ware (gtr); Al Hall (bass); Harold West (drs). 12/1945. U.S.A.

This is one of those borderline cases between modern rhythm-and-blues and old-time blues singing. Joe Turner is an artist in whose work I find little of interest. His voice is monotonous, and his accompanists are far too slick to please my reactionary taste. Only the late Frankie Newton has any claim to blues feeling. Byas turns in some fair stuff, and Johnson is just another boogie man, but I cannot tolerate electric guitars, which ruin what might otherwise have been a fair set of performances. The lyrics of *S.K. Blues* are profane, too.

O.K.

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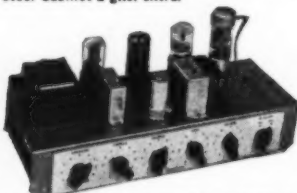
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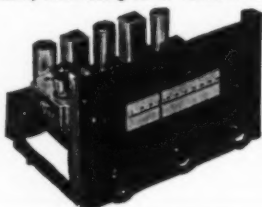


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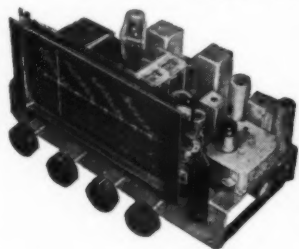
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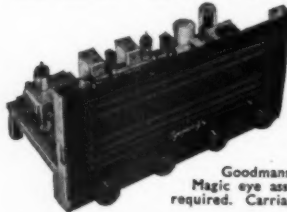


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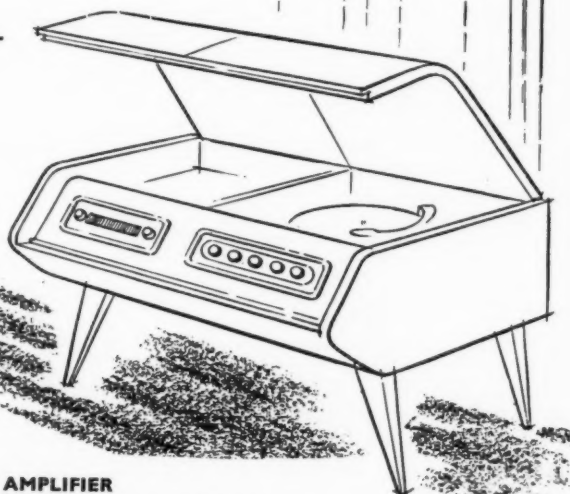
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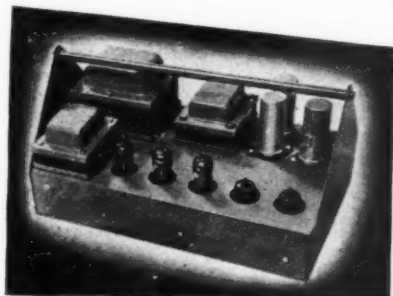
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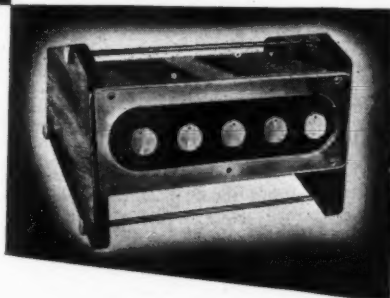


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TECHNICAL REPORTS

By P. WILSON, M.A.

The Trixette A720. Trix Electrical Co. Ltd. London.

Price 42 gns. (inc. P.T.).

Specification:

Output: 5 watts, push-pull, with negative feedback.

Controls: Volume, Bass, Treble.

Motor: Garrard RC120 Record Changer. (Single record player models are also available.)

Pickup: Garrard GC2 Crystal Type. (Magnetic heads suitable for export can be fitted.)

Loudspeakers: Twin 6 in. elliptical units.

Dimensions: 16½ in. by 14 in. by 11 in.

Weight: 31 lb.

I referred to this player a month or two ago and said how impressed I had been with it at the Audio Fair. I have since had a model at home to play about with at my leisure and all my earlier impressions have been fully confirmed.

I should not of course call it a High Fidelity instrument: no instrument of this size and compactness could be that. I reserve that title at present to instruments which have amplifiers with a greater range of "undistorted" power output (and in which the amount of intermodulation and harmonic distortion within that range is guaranteed to be less than 0.1 per cent); and which have loudspeaker systems properly loaded to deliver that power to the air. I do not ask for any specified frequency range without reference to those other factors, but my demands as a whole are most severe.



So I did not look for the highest attainable quality of reproduction from this little player. I looked for a pleasing quality without any tendency for any part of the scale to seem obtrusive, even in the loudest passages, when the volume is adjusted to suit a small room. I call these small instruments "Boudoir Models" for that reason.

It would be foolish to attempt to assess the performance in such circumstances in the usual technical terms that one uses for more ambitious instruments, and of course I shall not do so. But I think I can give readers an adequate appreciation of the result of my tests when I state that I had never an uneasy moment, and that when I had adjusted the two tone controls to my liking to suit the acoustic qualities of my small dining room and its furnishings, I obtained a clear-cut, balanced quality that I do not think is likely to be improved upon in an instrument of this calibre. Certainly, lightness and an

attractive appearance are both prime essentials and in these the A720 is conspicuously successful.

The BJ Reproducer. Burne-Jones Sunningdale Road, Cheam, Surrey. Price 24 Guineas

One day last month Mr. Peter Burne-Jones turned up at my house in Oxford with one of the first production models of his new loudspeaker reproducers. We fitted it up at once in a room adjoining my lounge with communication to the latter through a large curtained archway. Then we invited our ladies to come in and listen.

We were not disappointed and I was even forgiven for moving my wife's china cabinet (bodily with all its china and glasses!) a few feet so that the reproducer could be properly sited in the corner.

It is a simple and ingenious, yet as my wife thinks an elegant, corner reproducer built up of a smallish bass-reflex cabinet facing to the rear with a substantial wooden reflector to disperse the sound round each of the walls to a pair of louver openings, one on each side of the reproducer. In this way a useful horn loading is added to the bass reflex; and this, being seen by the speaker and the vent as an acoustic resistance, both increases the bass efficiency and damps the low frequency resonance at the same time.

Accommodation for a treble unit and, if desired, a small tweeter, is provided in a handsome grille unit which rests on top of the corner cabinet. The idea is that an 8 in. speaker should be used here in such a way that the radiation is backwards and upwards at a suitable angle as well as forwards from the back of the cone. Bass response from this unit is automatically reduced by this arrangement, and the treble response is dispersed over a wide area.

A small tweeter unit can also be added behind the grille, directed forwards and upwards so as to strengthen the axial response at the higher frequencies.

In the model as we first arranged it we had a Wharfedale Bronze Unit for the bass cabinet and a Wharfedale 8 in. unit for the treble. They were connected in parallel across the amplifier output (N.B. combined impedance 7½ ohms for a pair of 15 ohm units), and we had a 2 in. direct radiator unit connected through a 4 mfd capacitor as tweeter.

The quality of output was really impressive, especially at low volume, though I found the tweeter rather too peaky at high frequencies. Eventually I discarded it because it accentuated the interference I get from car ignition through my F.M. tuner; and all the pops and other imperfections in my records were likewise accentuated. Substitution of the Wharfedale 3 in. tweeter unit improved the smoothness considerably, but I should have preferred rather more space in the grille unit for this. There was not enough space for me to try the Kelly Ribbon Tweeter. It would therefore be well worth while for the makers to enlarge this grille as much as possible.

Subject to this, I find this reproducer to be a most ingenious and successful application of modern principles of design. The range and smoothness that can be obtained from quite inexpensive speaker units has to be heard to be believed. I found the two W/B units, HF1012 and T816, entirely suitable as well as the Wharfedale units I have mentioned and there are no doubt many others that will give excellent results. It is in fact a most versatile sort of reproducer, thanks to the acoustic loading system.

TECHNICAL TALK

Another Record Speed?

Many readers have apparently been puzzled by the announcement that the 1956 models of some gramophone motors will have a 16½ r.p.m. speed as well as 33½, 45 and 78 r.p.m. They naturally want to know whether records at that speed are likely to be issued and, if so, how soon, and what will they be like.

I have accordingly been making a few inquiries from the right end of the horse. None of the leading record manufacturers, so far as I have been able to ascertain, has any intention of making 16½ r.p.m. records over here; though they could easily do so if sufficient pressure were applied.

Why, then, have motor manufacturers made provision for 16½ r.p.m.? The answer appears to be twofold: first, export; second, copycat. 16½ records have in fact made their appearance both in America and in Germany. They were first made for Talking Books where a frequency range limited to about 200 c/s to 3,000 c/s (i.e. the telephone range) will just pass muster. But they are not altogether satisfactory even there, whilst for musical reproduction they are totally inadequate, especially at radii approaching 2 in. It is difficult enough to avoid excessive distortion and record wear at the inside grooves even at a 33½ r.p.m. speed: it would be much more than twice as difficult at the slower speed.

I am therefore all against this new move, and I sincerely hope that record makers will not allow themselves to be stamped.

The Radio Show

At the time when these notes have to be written I have only received a few notices about the exhibits at the Radio Exhibition which begins at Earls Court on August 22nd and goes on until the beginning of September. So far I have seen nothing really exciting which has not already been announced in these pages. But I hope to make my usual critical and discursive notes on the Show in our next issue.

Tracking Error

I promised last month to give fuller details about setting up swivelling pickup arms so as to give minimum error and minimum distortion. But to start with I want readers to be quite clear about the distinction between "tracing error" and "tracking error". The former, as I illustrated, is due to the difference in shape between the recording stylus and the reproducing stylus. Tracking error on the other hand is due to the fact that with a swivelling arm the axis about which the pickup armature rocks cannot be exactly tangential to the mean line of the record grooves at all points across the disc. At most points it is slightly skewed, and apart altogether from the effects of tracing error this skewing introduces intermodulation distortion approximately proportional to the amount of skew.

At the inner grooves of an LP record (i.e. at a radius of about 2½ in.) the distortion may amount to 2 per cent for each degree of skew. It is therefore a matter of some importance to determine the conditions for minimum error.

One way of tackling the problem, theoretically, is to determine the conditions for which the tracking error divided by the radius is at a minimum at all points across a record. But in practice one finds that the simpler process of finding the conditions for minimum error for all points between extreme radii of 2 in. and 6 in. gives a result (for a 10 in. or 12 in. record) which is as near perfection as one could wish. For by this process one can easily achieve an error of less than 2° at all points of a 12 in. record with zero error at the most important inner grooves. For LP records these may be taken on the

average to be at a radius of 2.5 in., the minimum radius according to the British Standard Specification being 2 in. radius.

Diagrams

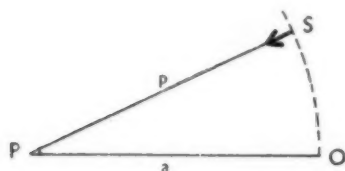


Fig. 1

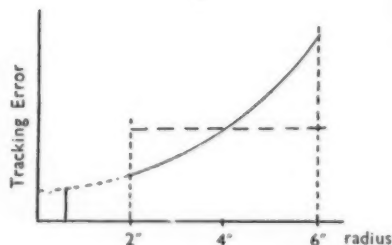


Fig. 2

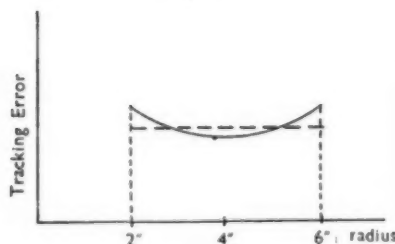


Fig. 3

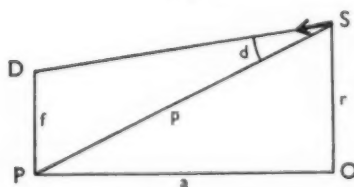


Fig. 4

To see how this is done let us look at Figs. 1 to 4. In Figs. 1 and 4 O represents the record centre, P the back pivot of the carrying arm, S the stylus. In the simple case of Fig. 1 it is assumed that the distances OP (= a) and SP (= p) are equal and that the axis about which the stylus rocks points directly along SP. In this case of course the stylus will exactly reach to the middle of the spindle when the pickup is brought to the centre. In Fig. 4 on the other hand SP is assumed to be longer than OP (so that the stylus will "overlap" the spindle) and the rocking axis of the stylus along SD to the right of the line SP so that the pickup has what is known as an "offset angle", δ . PD (= f) is a perpendicular from P on to the line SD and is known as the "linear offset".

In Fig. 1 it is easily seen from inspection that SP can never be tangential to the mean line of the groove at any point across the record. In fact the error at different radii follows a curve such as that shown in Fig. 2. Even with a 10 in. arm it will be as much as 6° at the inside grooves and 19° at the outside.

Now suppose by some device we could, as it were, shift the zero line from which we plot the error up to the position shown dotted. Then clearly we should get smaller errors throughout the range, though some would be in one direction and some in the other. Well, that is precisely what is effected by twisting the pickup mounting through an offset angle as shown in Fig. 4.

Suppose, in addition, that we could devise a means of twisting the curve of error so that it assumed a position as shown in Fig. 3. Then we could proceed to apply an offset angle thus shifting the zero line to the position shown dotted, and by this means we should achieve a remarkably small range of error with two zero points in the range. Precisely that is done by giving the pickup arm a critical amount of overlap as in Fig. 4.

The formulae connecting the various quantities shown in Fig. 4 are:

$$(1) p^2 - a^2 = r_0 r_1$$

where r_0 and r_1 are the radii of the outer and inner grooves.

$$(2) f = \frac{(\sqrt{r_0} + \sqrt{r_1})^2}{4}$$

so that f depends only on the outer and inner radii of the record and not at all upon the length of arm.

Taking $r_0 = 6$ in. and $r_1 = 2$ in., these formulae reduce to:

$$p^2 - a^2 = 12$$

$$f = 3.73 \text{ in.}$$

So your first test for a good pickup arm should be:

What is its linear offset?

With a couple of rulers, one projecting along the axis of the pickup and the other at right angles to it and with its edge passing through the back pivot, you can easily measure the offset for any particular arm. If it is substantially different from 3.7 in. then the tracking error will be unnecessarily large.

There are at present very few arms available for which the linear offset is, or can be made, so large as 3.7 in. What does one do if one has such an arm and wants to get the best possible result from it? The answer, I suggest, is either get rid of it (and this I myself would always do if the offset is less than 2 in.), or mount it so that the error is zero at a radius of 2.5 in.

To secure this, if you haven't an alignment protractor (and I hope some will be available soon), get a sheet of ruled foolscap and on one of the rules punch a hole to the size of your turntable spindle (standard size 0.285 in.). From the centre of this hole draw a line at right angles to the rules and along this line mark off a distance of 2.5 in. to a point which we will call X.

Put the punched hole over the spindle with the paper on the turntable. Put the stylus on the point X and move the base of the arm until the axis of the pickup (that is, the rocking axis of the stylus) lies parallel to the rules on the paper. The fact that there are a number of rules helps one very considerably to judge this setting; with a little care you should be able to judge to within a degree. Rotating the turntable and paper a little (but still keeping the stylus on point X) may help you to get a more suitable position for the base of the arm. Only when you are fully satisfied on this should you mark the screw holes for fixing it.

Next month I will repeat the instructions for Dynamic Levelling which enables side pressure other than that due to the modulation of the groove to be eliminated provided the tracking error is small. Unfortunately, however, it is only accurate for one speed and one naturally chooses 33. It can only be made zero for all conditions of use when a radial tracking carriage is used instead of a swivelling arm.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor does not necessarily agree with any views expressed in letters printed. Address: The Editor, THE GRAMOPHONE, The Glade, Green Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex.

Mario del Monaco

Your correspondent Mr. Deric Johansen is surely most unfair to your reviewers, when he states that he "cannot imagine a music reviewer ever wholeheartedly enjoying anything". Enjoyment and critical appraisal are entirely different things, and one may well enjoy a recording which is at the same time not without serious artistic shortcomings. The recent reissue of Conchita Supervia is a case in point. No critic would be completely honest if he did not write that her voice was at times marred by a very serious vibrato, and yet, at the same time her extraordinary vitality, feeling for words, and dramatic sense make her records quite irresistible.

I have never seen it denied in THE GRAMOPHONE, that Del Monaco has a remarkably fine voice—a true tenore robusto of apparently immense power and resonance—but despite this, or perhaps even because of it, he has made many very unsatisfactory records. I admire greatly his *Otello* recording, but his style in the earlier Verdi operas is sometimes appalling. Such an aria as "Quando le sere al placido" demands an elegance which he fails to command.

Mr. Johansen writes "In my opinion Del Monaco has the greatest voice I have ever heard." May one enquire whether he has ever really heard, in the flesh, Del Monaco, or Caruso, or Gigli or Björling? This is the only real test. Recordings can sometimes confirm the true status of an artist, but they can never do more than this. In any case, the three artists he mentions for comparison's sake were all really lyric tenors, and cannot be compared with an essentially robust tenor like Del Monaco. All three were capable of singing piano without loss of quality, and all three have an infinitely greater feeling for the shaping and building of a phrase than Del Monaco has yet shown, although recently he does appear to have developed a little more restraint, and his final scene in the Decca recording of *Otello* is most moving, on this account.

Haywards Heath.

JOHN FREESTONE.

With reference to your correspondent's letter in defence of Mario del Monaco (August issue), may I, as an admirer of each of the three tenors whom Mr. Johansen particularly decries, suggest that he is suffering from what Dr. Geoffrey Bush ("Musical Creation and the Listener") aptly describes as "comparativitis".

It is, I think, hardly relevant to an appraisal of Signor del Monaco's artistic stature, to dwell on the faults (real or imagined), of other singers. Moreover Mr. Johansen is using the very tactics he so soundly criticises in others, in so dogmatically presenting his own opinion of these singers.

We are all, I feel sure, sensible of Del Monaco's merits, as of his defects, and if Mr. Johansen fails to perceive the latter, then surely he must, in some measure, excuse the critics for occasionally overlooking the former.

Llanrhos, Caerns.

G. BROOK.

Scarlatti Sonatas

It may be of interest to some readers that the Scarlatti sonata on OL50078, played by Dorel Handman, is Longo 384. I notice in the June LP catalogue that this sonata still has a question mark against it. There is a 78 recording on C3768 played by Solomon. Dorel Handman's

Stentorian

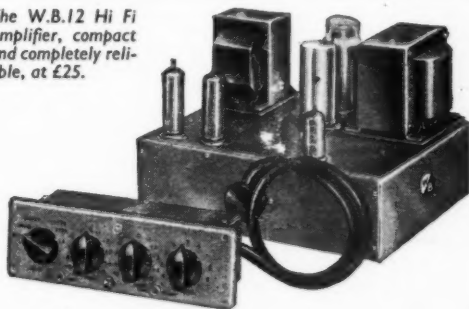
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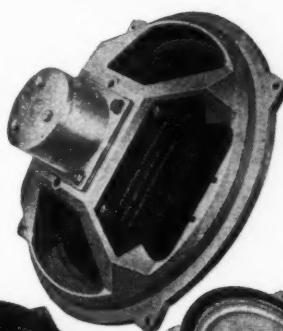
● Never before has there been such an interest in High Fidelity—every month new enthusiasts swell the ranks, and tributes to the performance of Stentorian products continue to reach us from all parts of the world.

The new speakers and cabinets shown here provide a wider choice than ever for those who require High Fidelity at realistic cost. Ask your dealer to demonstrate, or visit our London Office (109 Kingsway, W.C.2) any Saturday between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, to see and hear the full range of W.B. lines, which now comprises 26 items, including the new V.H.F. Tuner, successfully demonstrated at the Radio Show. You will be very welcome.

The W.B.12 Hi Fi Amplifier, compact and completely reliable, at £25.



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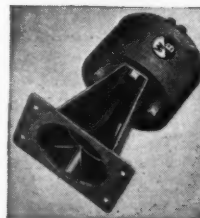


The new H.F. 816 at £6.17.0.

The new T.816, a mid-range and high frequency unit at £6.10.0.



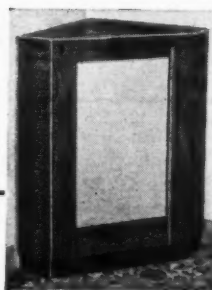
The latest Hi Fi Unit: a 15" speaker (H.F. 1514) at £24.10.0.



Tweeter Units are available at £4.4.0 and £12.12.0. The latter (T.12) is shown here.



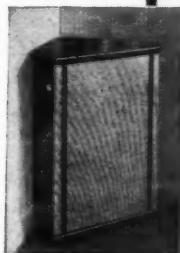
The new Senior Hi Fi Console, ready-to-assemble, at £16.16.0.



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There are now six ready-to-assemble cabinets, all beautifully made and finished.



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About these Hi-g heads . . .

11 Carr Street,
Cougee,
Sydney,
Australia.

Dear Sirs,

"- will track with ease all present day records". So reads your ad. for the new Hi-g Heads. "We will soon see about that", I said. The first test for this new L.P. Head was Decca's Brahms Fourth - always very difficult to handle I found on the old head. The shock I received was enough to put me to bed for a month - where was all that distortion? Where was all that groove jumping? Having recovered my strength and secretly suspecting it was just a fluke, I tried the Swan Lake - also another jumper - and then in a determined effort to prove you wrong, on went the Symphonie Fantastique and Rite of Spring.

At this stage the neighbours and family were seriously alarmed at sundry cries issuing from my room - they need not have worried - they were cries of pure joy. I had seriously considered installing expensive magnetic Pick-ups - of which I knew very little - but this will obviously be quite pointless now.

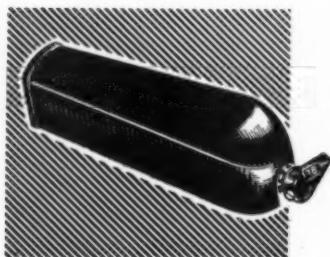
"- will track with ease all present day records" to which I say, "blessed be the name of ACOS Hi-g".

Yours with relief,
(Sgd.) Cliff Davidson.

Over to you, Mr. Davidson



. . . that is what Mr. Davidson has written - and we didn't go to Australia to prompt him! His letter sums up what many others have expressed. It really does pay to use ACOS Hi-g Pick-ups - both from the point of view of reproduction and of longer record life.



FREE The subject of Hi-g cannot be adequately explained in an advertisement, so we have produced an interesting booklet - "The ABC of Hi-g". May we send you a copy?



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rendering of this sonata will come as a bit of a surprise to those who have the Solomon disc.

The last Scarlatti sonata on ABE10001, played by Robert Casadesu, is referred to as Longo 463. It is in fact Longo 465, Longo 463 being the well-known "Tempo di ballo".

The Longo numbers of the Scarlatti sonatas on AP13001, played by Eliza Hansen, are:

1. Longo supplement 3; 2. Longo 58; 3. Longo 461; 4. Longo 488; 5. Longo 433; 7. Longo 262; 8. Longo 104. Number 6 on this record I have not yet been able to trace, but on going through Kirkpatrick's catalogue of the 555 sonatas I have narrowed it down to three possibles, Longo 200, 242 or 250. Livingstone, Nrn. Rhodesia. D. J. Bishop.

FEDERATION AND SOCIETY NOTES

The National Federation of Gramophone Societies will gladly supply information and advice concerning the establishment of new Gramophone Societies. Send a sixpenny postal order to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. C. H. Luckman, 41 Trinity Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex, and receive a circular of suggestions and other helpful and informative literature.

The Annual General Meeting of the Federation will take place in the Hall of the Royal Empire Society, London, on Saturday, November 24th, at 2 p.m.

National Gramophone Conference. The next Conference organised by the National Federation will be held at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts, from April 12th to 15th, 1957. Book this date now.

Notices for inclusion in the November issue of *The Gramophone* should be sent to Mr. G. H. Parfitt, 31 Lynwood Grove, Orpington, Kent, and should reach him by October 7th. Postcards please.

Acton & District Gramophone Society. Meets monthly on Mondays at the King's Arms, Acton Vale, W.3., at 7.30 p.m. Next meeting on September 17th. Details from the Hon. Sec., 24 Priory Avenue, Bedford Park, W.4.

Ayr Recorded Music Club. Season opens mid-September. Meets fortnightly in the Bonnie Doon Hotel, Carrick Road, Ayr. Details from Hon. Sec., Met. Office, Prestwick Airport, Ayrshire.

Barrow Gramophone Society. Season opens on September 14th with a recital by Mr. W. E. Kelly. Fortnightly meetings follow. Secretary, 21 Highlands Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness.

Bath Gramophone Society. 1956/7 season opens September 21st at 7.15 p.m., at Technical College, Lower Borough Walks. Full particulars and programmes from Hon. Sec., 24 Crescent Gardens, Bath, Somerset.

Belfast Gramophone Society. Season begins September 5th at 7.30 p.m. in the Union Hotel. Jazz Group commences September 12th. Details from Hon. Sec., 29 Tweskard Park, Belfast.

Blackburn Gramophone Society. New season commences with A.C.M. September 4th. Subsequent recitals on September 18th, October 2nd and 16th. Meets in Room 4, Y.M.C.A., Blackburn, at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Sec., 43 St. Alban's Road, Darwen, Lancs.

Bognor Regis & District Gramophone Society. New season commences October 1st with recital by Philips Record Division at Rex Ballroom, Bognor Regis. Thereafter on alternate Mondays at Polly Ann Restaurant, High Street, Bognor Regis, at 7.45 p.m. Details from Hon. Sec., 80 Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis.

Braintree Gramophone Society. 1956/7 season opens September 22nd, 7.30 p.m., at the Braintree Community Centre, Sandpit Road. Meets fortnightly. Details from Hon. Sec., 66 Cressing Road, Braintree, Essex.

Brentwood & District Gramophone Society. 1956/7 season commences September 19th. Recitals on alternate Wednesdays at Norrish's Restaurant at 8 p.m. Details from Hon. Sec., 22 Westwood Avenue, Brentwood, Essex.

City of Bristol Gramophone Society. 1956/7 season commences on September 17th. Meets every Monday at the Bristol Music Club, 76 St. Paul's Road, Clifton, Bristol, 8, at 7.15 p.m. Syllabus and full details from Aust. Hon. Sec., 19 Beckington Road, St. John's Lane, Bristol 3. (Tel. 70008).

Bushey & Watford Gramophone Society. Meets weekly on Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. in the Galahad Room, Methodist Church, King Edward Road, Oxhey. Details from Hon. Sec., "Dun-I", Folly Pathway, Radlett.

Cardiff Gramophone Society. The 14th season commences on September 11th at C.C.T.E.W.A. premises, Millicent Street. Meets weekly on Tuesday evenings. Details from Hon. Sec., 4 Brayford Place, Llanrumney, Cardiff.

Chesham & District Gramophone Society. Meets every Monday evening at 7.30 in the Co-operative Hall, Chesham Broadway. Hi-fi equipment, all tastes catered for.

Croydon Gramophone Society. Meets on alternate Saturdays in Norbury Library at 7 p.m. Next meeting September 15th. Syllabus from Hon. Sec., 23 Penrith Road, Thornton Heath.

Derby: The Listener's Group. Last monthly meeting on September 12th at 7.30 p.m. in the Scouts H.Q., Wilson Street. Weekly recitals will commence in October. Details from Hon. Sec., 41 Siddals Road, Derby.

Dolls Hill Gramophone Society. Founded 1947. Meets in N.W. London and has vacancies for a few new members. Please write to Hon. Sec., 77 Mora Road, Gickwood, N.12, for particulars and programmes.

Dudley Recorded Music Society. Meets each Friday at 7.30 p.m. in the Art Gallery, St. James Road, Dudley. Programme and membership details from Hon. Sec., 2 Dingle Road, Dudley.

Dulwich & Forest Hill Gramophone Society. Meets on September 7th and 21st at 2 Jews Walk, Sydenham, S.E.26, commencing at 7.45 p.m. Details from Hon. Sec., 87 Broadfield Road, S.E.6.

Dundee Recorded Music Society. Season opens October 2nd. Interesting syllabus. Hi-fidelity equipment. Comfortable accommodation. Details from Hon. Sec., 120 Byron Street, Dundee.

Ealing Gramophone Society. Meets alternate Fridays from September 14th at Parkfields, South Ealing Road, W.5, at 7.30 p.m. Full particulars from Hon. Sec., 150 Argyle Road, Ealing, W.13.

Eastbourne Gramophone Society. Meets on alternate Thursdays in the Cumberland Hotel at 7.30 p.m. New season begins September 20th. For details of programmes, etc., write to Hon. Sec., 10 Grange Gardens, Eastbourne.

Edinburgh Gramophone Society. 10th season commences October 4th at Film House, Hill Street. Meetings thereafter on alternate Tuesdays. Speakers will include Boris Semenov, Hans Redlich, and Alexander Gibson. First-class equipment. Full particulars from Hon. Sec., 18 Hartington Place, Edinburgh, 10 (Tel: Fou. 1155).

Enfield Recorded Music Society. 1956/7 season commences on September 21st. Meets in the Enfield Grammar School (Room 1) on the 1st and 3rd Friday in each month. Details from Hon. Sec., 88 Halstead Road, Winchmore Hill, N.21.

Glasgow Gramophone Club. 10th season 1956/7 opens on September 26th at 7.30 p.m. Meets on alternate Wednesdays at Service Women's Club, 203 West George Street. Full details from Hon. Sec., "Kirkton", Carlsbridge Road, Glasgow.

Glasgow Recorded Music Society. Meets on September 7th, 14th, and 28th and fortnightly thereafter at 19 Ashley Street, Glasgow, C3. Syllabus from Hon. Sec., 5 Elie Street, Glasgow, W.1.

Goodmayes Gramophone & Music Society. Meets on Thursday evenings, the season commencing in September. Speakers for this season include Lady Hart, Scott Goddard, Dobson and Young, Roger Fluke and John Huntley. Full details from Hon. Sec., 98 Blythwood Road, Goodmayes, Essex. (Tel: Seven Kings 7380).

Henry Wood Gramophone Circle. Hon. Sec., 4 Beulah Hill, S.E.19. Meets every third Sunday at the above address at 7 p.m. Recorded music of the type usually associated with the Proms in arm-chair comfort.

Hitchin Gramophone Club. Meets on alternate Thursdays in the Music Room, Rural Music Schools Association, at Little Benslow Hills, Benslow Lane, Hitchin, at 8 p.m. First meeting of 1956/7 season on September 20th. Details from Joint Hon. Sec. 43a Hermitage Road, Hitchin.

Hornsey Gramophone Society. Meets alternate Thursdays at the Muswell Hill Branch Library, N.10. First meeting September 13th at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., Central Library, Tottenham Lane, N.8.

Letchworth Recorded Music Society. Meets on alternate Mondays from September 10th. New members and visitors welcome. Further details and programmes from the Hon. Sec., 7 Norton Way North, Letchworth. Tel. 2091.

Liverpool Recorded Opera Society. Meets from September to May on alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m. in the Y.W.C.A., Slater Street, Liverpool, commencing September 24th. Further details from the Hon. Sec., 16 Charles Berrington Road, Liverpool, 15.

London Manuscript & Recorded Music Society. Monthly meetings. New members welcome. For particulars write Secretary, Dinah Rehearsal Studios, 1 Devonshire Terrace, W.1.

London Symphony Orchestra Club. Hon. Sec., 115 Maida Vale, W.9. September 8th—Coach Tour of the Cotswolds. September 13th—A talk "The Halls of Music", by Maurice Miles, at New Chiltern Rooms, 83 Chiltern Street, W.1. September 22nd—End of Summer Season Dance at the "Princess Louise", 208/9 High Holborn, W.C.1.

Midland Gramophone Society. Meets on alternate Thursdays from September 13th at the Midland Institute, Paradise Street, Birmingham, 1. Prospectus from Hon. Sec., 62 Epwell Road, Birmingham, 23.

North Manchester Gramophone Society. 1956/7 season commences September 25th and on alternate Tuesdays thereafter at Atlow Mount, Bury Old Road (nr. Half Way House), Manchester, 8. Full particulars from Hon. Sec., 9 Queens Drive, Prestwich, Lancs.

Oxford City Gramophone Society. Meets 2nd and 4th Monday in each month at St. Columba Church Hall, Alfred Street. New season commences September 10th. Hon. Sec., 129 Ridgfield Road, Oxford.

Phoenix Gramophone Society. Meets on alternate Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. in Room 45, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, 1. New season from September 6th to May 23rd, 1957. Hon. Sec., 22 Burden Road, Moreton, Wirral, Cheshire.

Putney Gramophone Circle. 10th season commences on September 2nd. Meets on alternate Tuesdays. Details from Hon. Sec., 17 Windermere Road, Coulsdon, Surrey.

Putney Gramophone Society. Meets on alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m. at the Miramar Hotel, 57 Putney Hill, S.W.15. On September 17th, talk by Malcolm Macdonald ("M.M." of THE GRAMOPHONE). October 29th, Felix Abrahamian. Membership details from Hon. Sec., 6 Combemartin Road, S.W.18.

Reading Gramophone Society. 3rd season commences on September 11th at the Abbey Gateway at 7.30 p.m. New members welcome. Further particulars from Hon. Sec., 31 Talfourd Avenue, Reading.

Recorded Vocal Art Society. Autumn season opens September 6th and alternate Thursdays at 7 p.m. Bel canto collectors welcome. Further particulars from Hon. Sec., 10 Arlesford Road, Stockwell, S.W.9.

Sanderstead Gramophone Society. 1956/7 season opens at Congregational Church Hall, Sanderstead Hill (next to Sanderstead Library) on September 24th. Hon. Sec., 4 Hill Close, Purley, Surrey. (Uplands 6307).

Sheffield Gramophone Society. Season commences September 10th with a Record Review. September 24th, Wagner evening. Meets fortnightly in Y.M.C.A., Fargate, Sheffield, on Mondays at 7.30 p.m. Details from Hon. Sec., 62 Whirlowdale Road, Sheffield, 7 (72973).

Sutton Coldfield. The inaugural meeting of the proposed gramophone society will take place at the Central Library on Friday, September 14th, at 7.30 p.m.

Torbay Gramophone Society. The first meetings of the new season on September 6th and 27th, and fortnightly thereafter at Callard's Cafe, Torquay, at 7.45 p.m. Details from Hon. Sec., 38 Quinta Road, Babacombe, Torquay. (Tel: Torquay 87558).

Uppminster Recorded Music Society. The inaugural meeting will be held at 34 Park Drive, Uppminster, on September 28th at 8 p.m. Those interested in classical recorded music are invited to attend.

Verdi Society. Opens its 7th season with "Rigoletto" on October 2nd at the Walker Art Gallery Lecture Hall, Liverpool, at 7.30 p.m. Meets twice monthly on Tuesdays. Syllabus from Hon. Sec., 30 Sutcliffe Street, Liverpool, 6.

Walsall Recorded Music Society. 1956/7 season commences on September 20th at Pattison's Cafe, The Bridge, Walsall, at 7.30 p.m., and fortnightly thereafter. Full details from Hon. Sec., 17 Bentley New Drive, Walsall.

Whitley Bay Gramophone Society. Meets every fortnight on Sundays at 3 Waverley Avenue, Monkseaton, at 7.30 p.m. Next meeting September 9th. Full details from Hon. Sec., 25 Chilton Green, North Shields.

Wimbledon & District Gramophone Society. Meets at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Wimbledon Broadway, at 7.45 p.m. September 7th—"A Mediterranean Cruise". September 21st—"Gilbert and Sullivan". Hon. Sec., 18 Herbert Road, S.W.19.

Woking Gramophone Society. The fortnightly meetings start on September 3rd at 8 p.m. at Y.M.C.A. Hall. New members welcome. Hon. Treas., 73 Arnold Road, Woking, Surrey.

Working: Recorded Music Club. Meets every Monday at 7.45 p.m. at the Connaught Studios (next Connaught Theatre). New season begins September 17th. Full particulars from Hon. Sec., 33 Orient Road, South Lancing, Sussex.

"The Gramophone" Exchange & Mart

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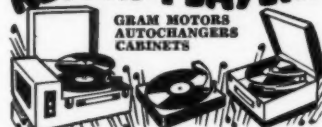
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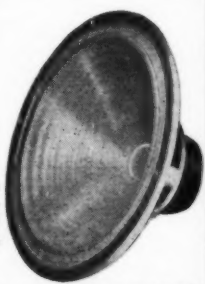
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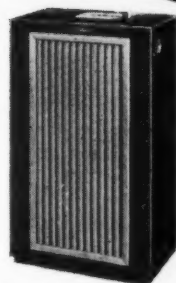
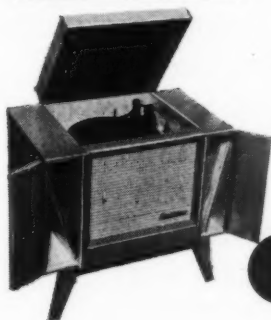
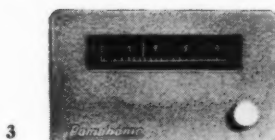
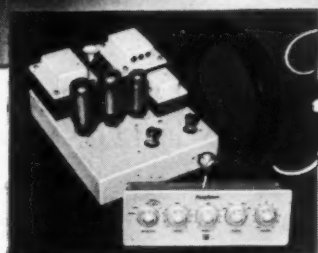
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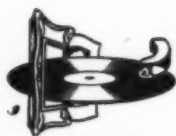
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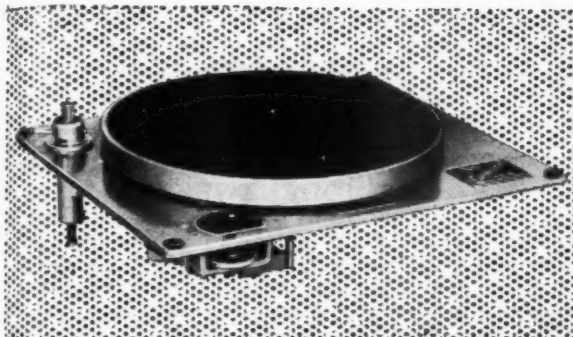


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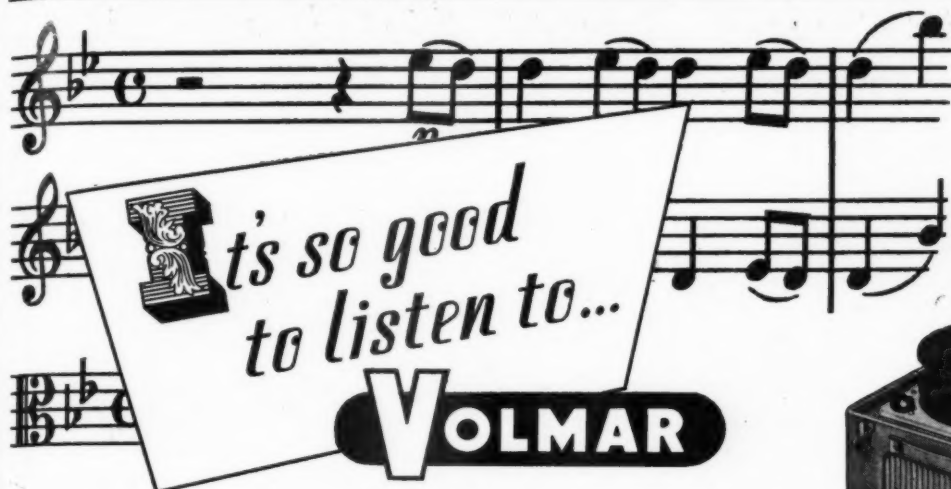
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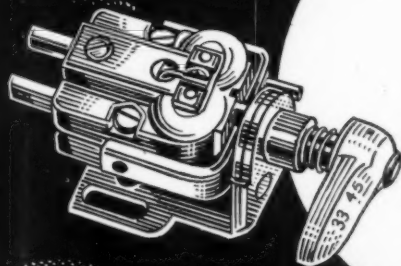
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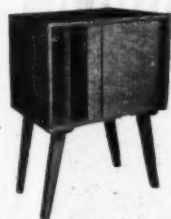
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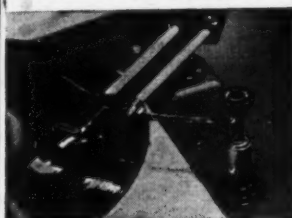
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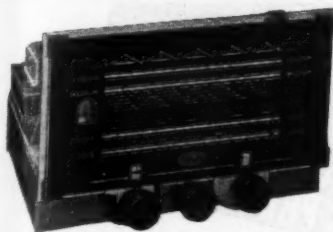
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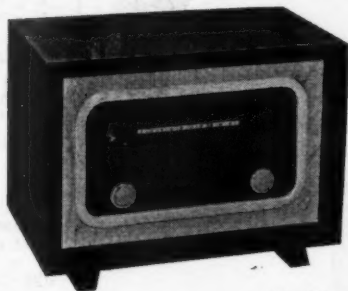


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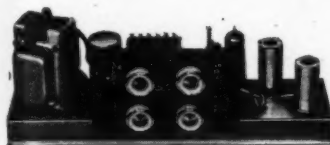
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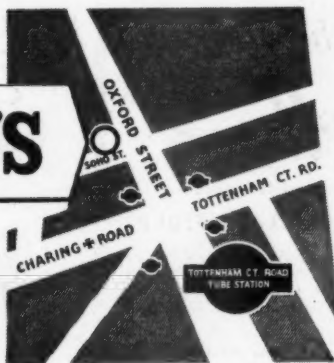
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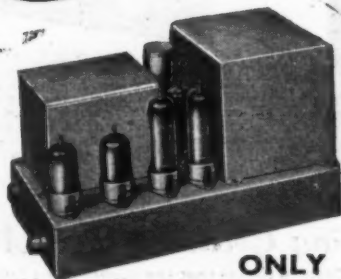
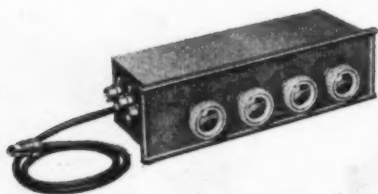
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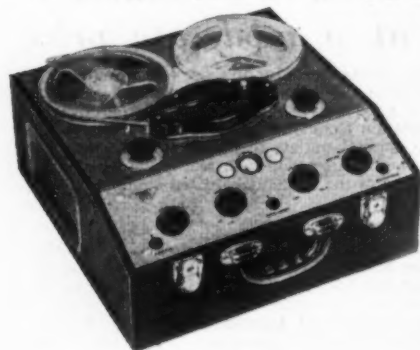
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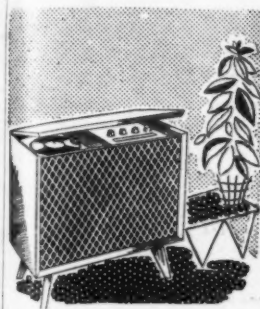
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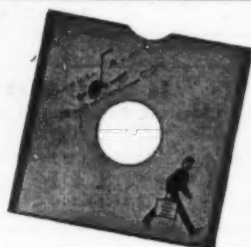
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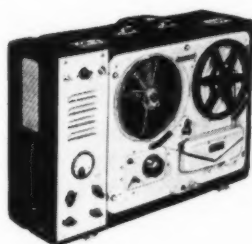
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